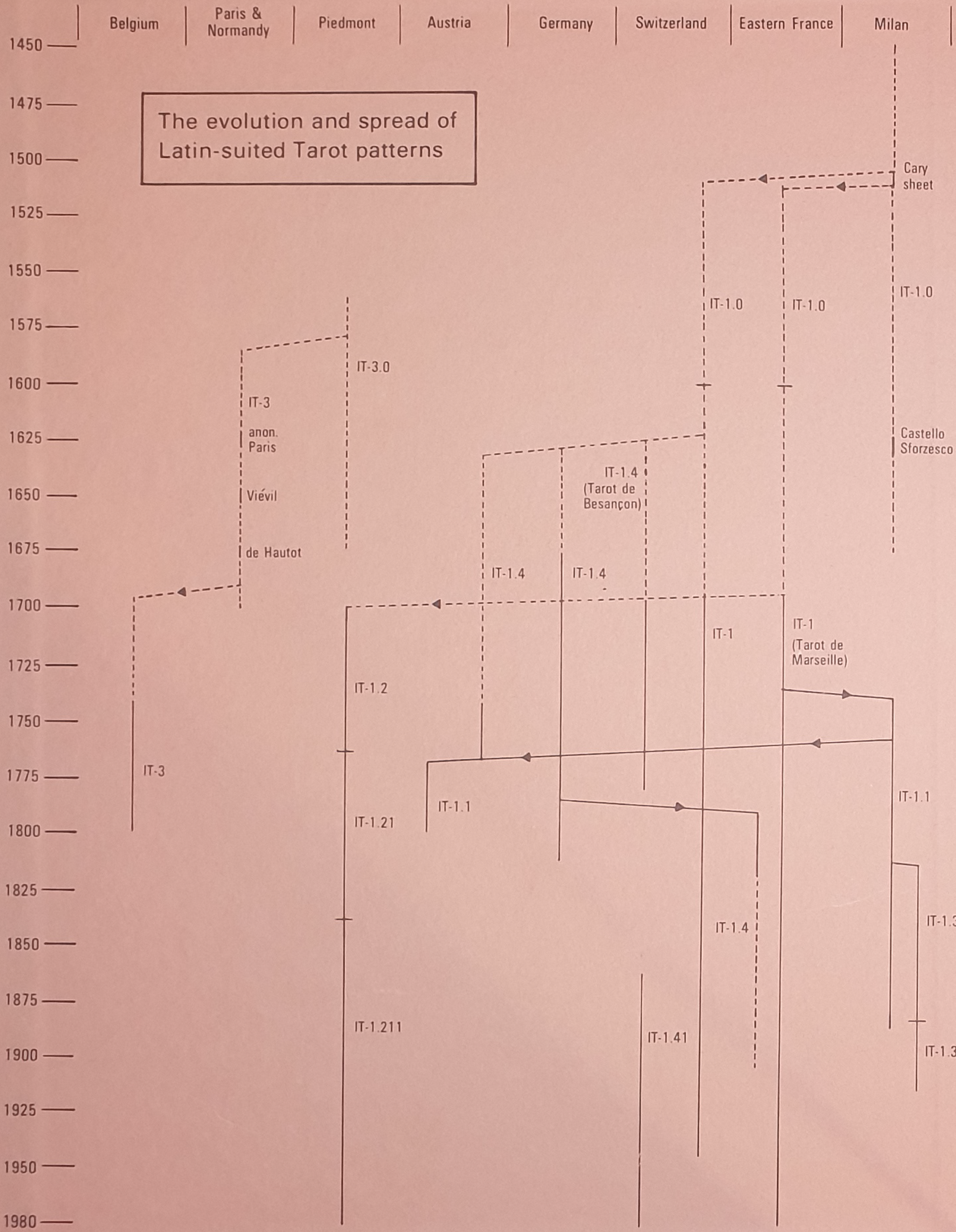
THE GAME OF TAROT

Michael Dummett



The evolution and spread of Latin-suited Tarot patterns

Belgium
Paris & Normandy
Piedmont
Austria
Germany
Switzerland
Eastern France
Milan
1450
1475
1500
1525
1550
1575
1600
1625
1650
1675
1700
1725
1750
1775
1800
1825
1850
1875
1900
1925
1950
1980
Cary sheet
IT-1.0
IT-1.0
IT-1.0
IT-3.0
IT-3
anon. Paris
Viévil
de Hautot
Castello Sforzesco
IT-1.4 (Tarot de Besançon)
IT-1.4
IT-1.4
IT-1
IT-1 (Tarot de Marseille)
IT-1.2
IT-3
IT-1.1
IT-1.21
IT-1.1
IT-1.4
IT-1.3
IT-1.211
IT-1.41
IT-1.31

Genoa
Florence
Rome
Sicily
Bologna
Ferrara & Venice
1450
1475
1500
1525
1550
1575
1600
1625
1650
1675
1700
1725
1750
1775
1800
1825
1850
1875
1900
1925
1950
1980
Rosenwald
IT-5.0
Rothschild/ Beaux Arts
Metropolitan Museum
IT-4
A. Hebreo
IPT-5
Rome 'Love'
alla Colonna
PT-6.0
IPM-5
Orfeo
IT-2
IPM-5
IPM-5 (Minchiate)
PT-6
IPM-5
Tuzzolino, Cimino
IPM-5.1
Fortuna
PT-6.1
IPM-5.1

The Game of Tarot

from Ferrara to Salt Lake City

Michael Dummett

with the assistance of Sylvia Mann

Duckworth

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to MARCELLO CIMINO

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Annotated List of Illustrations

(between pages 320 and 321)

1. Suit-systems

Top left: German

King of Acorns, Ober of Leaves, Unter of Bells, Deuce (Ace) of Hearts; from German-suited pack (one of the patterns used in Saxony) by V.E.B. Altenburger Spielkartenfabrik, Altenburg, 1969, in S. Mann Collection

Top right: Swiss

King of Shields, Ober of Roses, Unter of Bells, Banner (10) of Acorns; from Swiss-suited pack by D. Hurter of Schaffhausen, *c.* 1860, in S. Mann Collection

Below: French

King of Hearts, Queen of Spades, Jack of Diamonds, Ace of Clubs; from French-suited pack in official pattern of 1813 (Paris pattern) in S. Mann Collection

2. Latin suits

Top left: Italian

King of Batons, Cavalier of Coins, Jack of Cups, 5 of Swords; from Italian-suited pack (Trentino pattern) by A.S.S. of Leinfelden, 1979, in S. Mann Collection

Top right: 'Portuguese'

King of Batons, Cavalier of Coins, Maid of Cups, 4 of Swords; from Portuguese-suited pack by the Real Fabrica de Lisboa, *c.* 1860, in S. Mann Collection

Below left: Spanish

King of Coins, Cavalier of Cups, Jack of Batons, 6 of Swords; from Spanish-suited pack (Andalusian pattern) made in Cadiz, *c.* 1870, in S. Mann Collection

Below right: Italian, early variant form

8 of Batons, 2 of Batons, 9 of Batons, 4 of Swords, 3 of Swords, 2 of Swords; part of an uncut sheet, late fifteenth century, probably from Venice, in the Magyar Nemzeti Museum, Budapest, taken from the same wood block as a sheet in the Cary Collection (old catalogue no. I-1008), Beinecke Library, Yale University; illustration reproduced from plate on p. 394 of 'A Stencil Sheet of Playing Cards of the late fifteenth century with two related Uncut Sheets of Cards' by Melbert B. Cary, Jr., *The Print Collectors' Quarterly*, vol. 26, 1939, pp. 392-423. See pp. 17-18, 404-5

3. Mamlūk playing cards now in Istanbul

King of Polo-Sticks, King of Coins, Viceroy of Swords (formerly the 9), Second Viceroy of Cups, Second Viceroy of Coins (replacement card from different pack), 10 of Coins; from fifteenth-century pack in Topkapi Sarayi Museum, Istanbul. The illustrations are taken from photographs obtained for the author by Mr Ralph Pinder Wilson. Unlike those in L.A. Mayer, *Mamluk Playing Cards*, ed. R. Ettinghausen and O. Kurz, Leiden, 1971, they show very clearly the parts of the designs on the cards of the primary pack over which the lower inscriptions have been painted, at the cost of making those inscriptions almost illegible; they also include a 4 and 10 of Coins, the latter illustrated here, not mentioned by Mayer or by Ettinghausen and Kurz. See pp. 39-44

4. Suits from an eight-suited Indian Ganjifa pack

Clockwise from the top: King of Silver (*safed*), 2 of Merchandise (*qimash*), King of Gold (*surkh*), 5 of Swords (*shamsher*), 7 of Slaves (*ghulam*), 4 of Lyres (*chang*), 6 of Crowns (*taj*); *in centre*: 6 of Documents (*bharat*). From a modern Moghul Ganjifa pack (Deccan type) from Andhra Pradesh, in S. Mann Collection. See pp. 51-5

5. Trump cards and Queens from the Metropolitan Museum pack (no. 21)

Top row: Fortitude, Bagatto, ? Queen of Cups, –, –; *second row*: Queen of Coins, Queen of Batons, Queen of Swords, XI Hermit, XII Hanged Man; *third row*: XVIII Sun, XVIIII Angel, XX Justice, World, XVII Moon; *bottom row*: –, –, VIII Love, VI Temperance, (unidentifiable, possibly XVI Star). One of three uncut sheets for the same late fifteenth-century Tarot pack, probably from Venice or Ferrara, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (catalogue no. 26.101.5, purchased by Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1926). See pp. 75 and 404-6. Not previously reproduced so far as known

6. Trump cards from the Rosenwald pack (no. 22)

Top row: Moon, Sun, World, Angel; *middle row*: X Chariot, XII Hermit, Hanged Man, Wheel of Fortune; *bottom row*: II Popess, III Empress, IIII Emperor, V Pope. Part of an uncut sheet, showing three Queens and twenty-one trumps, for a late fifteenth-century Tarot pack, probably from Florence, in the Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (catalogue no. B 19823). See pp. 75, 395 and 403

7. Suit cards from the Rosenwald pack (no. 22)

Top row: Jack of Batons, Jack of Swords, Maid of Cups, Maid of Coins; *middle row*: Cavalier of Coins, Cavalier of Swords, Cavalier of Cups, Cavalier of Batons; *bottom row*: 6 of Cups, 7 of Cups, 8 of Cups, 9 of Cups. Part of an uncut sheet, probably for the same pack as illustrated on plate 6, also in the Rosenwald Collection (catalogue no. B 19821). See pp. 75, 395 and 403. Not previously illustrated as far as known

8. *Top two rows*: hand-painted tarocchi from the Victoria & Albert Museum (no. 12)

Ace of Cups, Star, Jack of Coins, Death. Fifteenth century; see p. 72

Below: Tozzi tarocchi (no. 8)
Wheel of Fortune, King of Swords. From a set of fifteenth-century hand-painted cards formerly in the possession of Mr Piero Tozzi, present whereabouts now mostly unknown. See p. 70. Illustration taken from article by M.L. D'Otrange in *The Connoisseur*, vol. CXXXIII, 1954, pp. 54-60

9. *Top row, and middle row, two cards at left*: d'Este tarocchi (no. 6)

Bagatto, Jack of Batons, Sun, World, Cavalier of Swords, Temperance; from fifteenth-century hand-painted pack made for the d'Este family in the Cary Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University. See p. 69

Middle row, two cards at right: two Milanese Fanti (Jacks) (no. 17)

Jacks of Swords and Coins; Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hanover (Landesgalerie). These two hand-painted fifteenth-century cards, formerly in the Kestner Museum, Hanover, are not necessarily from a Tarot pack. See p. 73

Bottom row: Brambilla tarocchi (no. 2)
Wheel of Fortune, Queen of Batons; from a fifteenth-century pack, painted by Bonifacio Bembo, in the Brera Gallery, Milan. See pp. 68, 79

10. Cards from the Visconti di Modrone tarocchi (no. 1)

Top row: King of Swords, Queen of Batons, Knight of Cups; *middle row*: Dame of Swords, Page (Jack) of Cups, Maid of Coins; *bottom row*: Love, Hope, Charity. From the pack painted by Bonifacio Bembo for Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, in the Cary Collection, Beinecke Library„ Yale University; it originally had six court cards in each suit and included the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity among the trumps. If all the usual trump subjects were present, it would have had 24 trumps, as suggested on p. 78. It seems unlikely, however, that the fourth cardinal virtue, Prudence, should not have been included. Miss Moakley, in her book on the Visconti-Sforza pack (no. 3), pointed out that in that pack the Popess depicts a historical character, Sister Manfreda, a relative of the Visconti family who was elected Pope by the Guglielmite sect, and burned at the stake in 1300. Conceivably this represented the first appearance of the Popess in the Tarot pack, Prudence being eliminated to make room for her. If so, and if the Visconti di Modrone pack did have 24 trump cards, the Popess may have been the only one of the usual subjects missing from that pack. See pp. 68, 77-9

11. The portrait of Prince Fibbia in Bologna

Seventeenth-century portrait of Francesco Antelminelli Castracani Fibbia (1360-1419) in the palazzo Fibbia, 14 via Galliera, Bologna. Photograph reproduced by kind permission of the occupiers, the Associazione Artigiani. This portrait has not previously been illustrated. See pp. 66-7

12. The Tarocchi Players: wall painting *c*. 1440 at the Casa Borromeo, Milan.

    See pp. 67-8

13. *Top row*: wider Guildhall pair (no. 14)

    Ace of Swords, Ace of Cups; hand-painted fifteenth-century cards in the Collection of the Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards at the Guildhall Library, London: compare the Ace of Cups on plate 16. See pp. 72-5

    Middle row: narrower Guildhall pair (no. 15)

    Jack of Batons, the World; hand-painted fifteenth-century cards, from a different pack, in the same Collection. See pp. 73-5, 84-5

    Bottom row: Goldschmidt cards (no. 19) and Falconer card (forgery) (no. 20)
    Unidentified subject (? Sun) (card (b)), Ace of Swords, Falconer (card (a)); (at right) single Falconer card. Though the isolated Falconer card at the right is known to be a forgery, it is presumably copied from some lost original. Deutsches Spielkarten Museum, Leinfelden. See pp. 73-5, 84-5

14. A late fifteenth-century sheet of Tarot cards, probably from Milan (no. 24)

    Top row: ?, Wheel of Fortune, Chariot, Love, ?; *second row*: Fortitude, Popess (?), Emperor, Empress, Pope (?); *third row*: Sun, Moon, Star, Bagatto, Fool (?); *bottom row*: Tower, Devil, Temperance, 7 of Batons, 8 or 9 of Batons. The illustration shows the whole surviving part of this uncut sheet, which is in the Cary Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University (old catalogue no. I-1010). See pp. 76, 135 and 406-8. Not previously reproduced. Miss Mann thinks the card here identified as the Popess is more likely to represent the Pope

15. *Above, from left to right*: Tower, Star, Moon, Devil and Chariot from an early Bolognese Tarot pack (no. 23)

    Although shown separately, these five cards come from an uncut sheet of the late fifteenth century in the Rothschild Collection, Louvre (catalogue no. 3804 LR) which shows six cards, the sixth being Death. See pp. 78, 315-16 and 402-3

    Below, from left to right: the Devil, by A. Hebreo (no. 27); Love, sixteenth century (no. 28); the World, from Milan, seventeenth century (no. 32); 2 of Coins, by Paolino di Castelletto, 1499
    The Devil by Agnolo Hebreo is an isolated card from a sixteenth-century Tarot pack, probably from Bologna, in the British Museum; the back has a dotted border, which was originally folded over in the familiar way to make a border for the face, and, within the border, a design showing a man with hands bound behind him, with the legend CHA PERSESE GRATA EL CVLLO and, at the bottom, the name M. AGNOLO HEBREO. Love, numbered VIII, is another isolated card, from a sixteenth-century Tarot pack probably made in Ferrara or Venice, in the Museo Nazionale delle Arti e Tradizioni Popolari, Rome; the back, again with a dotted border, folded over, shows a

standing winged Cupid with bow and quiver, and has no name or legend. The World, numbered XXI, is one of a set of six seventeenth-century Tarot cards made in Milan in the Raccolta delle Stampe Achille Bertarelli at the Castello Sforzesco, Milan; as far as is known, it has not previously been reproduced. The 2 of Coins dated 1499 is in the same Collection, and is not necessarily from a Tarot pack; it, too, is of Milanese origin. For these cards, see pp. 316, 393, 403 and 408-12

16. The Tarot pack devised by Matteo Maria Boiardo

King of Whips, Queen of Eyes, Cavalier of Vases, Jack of Arrows, 8 of Eyes, 2 of Whips; from a wood-engraved pack of the late fifteenth century, probably from Urbino, sold at auction at Christie's, London, on 24 November 1971 to Signor Carlo Alberto Chiesa of Milan, and now in a private collection in Switzerland. The verses are by Boiardo. See pp. 76-7 and 420-2

17. Cards from an Italian Tarot pack of the sixteenth century now at Rouen (no 25)

Top row: Victoriae Premium (= Chariot) 7; Rerum Edax (Time = Hermit) 11; Perditorum Raptor (Pluto = Devil) 14; Inclitum Sydus (Star)16; *bottom row*: Fool; Jack of Swords; 2 of Batons; Ace of Batons. The pack, which is probably from Venice, is in the Leber Collection, Bibliothèque Municipale, Rouen (catalogue no. 1351-XIV). See pp. 86, 392, 396, 400

18. Trump cards and Matto from a seventeenth-century Tarocco bolognese

Top row: Death, Temperance, the Devil, the Tower (Saetta); *middle row*: the Star, the Moon, the Sun, the Angel; *bottom row*: the World, the Fool; from a pack in the Réserve des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Compare plates 15 and 20. Not previously illustrated so far as known

19. Suit cards from a seventeenth-century Tarocco bolognese

Top row: Kings of Cups, Coin, Batons and Swords; *middle row*: Maid of Cups, Maid of Coins, Queen of Batons, Queen of Swords; *bottom row*: Cavaliers of Cups, Coins, Batons and Swords. From the same pack as plate 18. Not previously illustrated as far as known

20. *Top two rows*: eighteenth-century Minchiate cards

Top row: trumps XI (the Hunchback or Time, corresponding to the Hermit), XXI (Water), XXVIII (Sagittarius) and the Trumpets (le Trombe); *second row*: King of Cups, King of Swords, Maid of Coins, Jack of Swords. From a Minchiate pack by 'al Mondo', Bologna, in S. Mann Collection

Bottom two rows: Tarocco Bolognese (*third row*: nineteenth-century pack; *bottom row, right*: seventeenth-century pack; *bottom row, left*: modern pack)

Third row: Moor, trump 12 (Traitor, corresponding to the Hanged Man), trump 15 (Thunderbolt, corresponding to the Tower), the Sun;

from a pack by Alessandro Grandi, Bologna, *c.* 1865, in S. Mann Collection. *Bottom row, left*: Fool, trump 10 (Wheel); from a pack by S.A. Beghi, Milan, 1945, in S. Mann Collection. *Bottom row, right*: Maid of Cups, Jack of Swords; from a late seventeenth-century pack by 'al Soldato' of Bologna in S. Mann Collection. Compare plates 15, 18 and 19

21. Cards from a seventeenth-century Tarot pack with the trade-name 'Orfeo' (no. 31)

Top row: Cavaliers of Swords, Batons, Cups and Coins; *middle row*: Jacks of Swords, Batons, Cups and Coins; *bottom row*: Fool, King of Batons, Ace of Swords, Ace of Coins. From a pack made in Florence, most of the cards with Minchiate designs, in the Cary Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University (new catalogue no. ITA-63, old catalogue no. I-11), not previously reproduced. See pp. 378, 394 and 402

22. 'Portuguese'-suited pack by Ciliberto, 1597

Top row: King of Swords, Cavalier of Cups, Cavalier of Coins; *middle row*: Maid of Batons, Maid of Coins, King of Cups; *bottom row*: Ace of Coins, Ace of Batons, Ace of Swords. From a regular 'Portuguese'-suited pack made by Pietro Ciliberto, probably in Sicily, in S. Mann Collection. See pp. 20 and 379

23. The alla Colonna sheets, 'Portuguese' suit-system. *Above*: Tarot pack (no. 30); *below*: regular pack

Sheet at top left: Maid of Swords, Maid of Batons, Cavalier of Coins, Cavalier of Batons, 2 of Swords, 3 of Swords; *sheet at top right*: trumps 10 (Chariot), 11 (Wheel), 5 (Sultan), 6 (Love), 20 (World ?), 21 (Angel ?); *sheet at bottom left*: King of Coins, King of Cups, King of Swords, King of Batons, Maid of Coins, Maid of Cups, Maid of Swords, Maid of Batons, 5 of Swords, 4 of Swords, 3 of Swords, 2 of Swords; *sheet at bottom right*: Ace of Coins, Ace of Cups, Ace of Batons, Ace of Swords, Cavalier of Coins, Cavalier of Cups, Cavalier of Swords, Cavalier of Batons, 9 of Swords (?), –, 7 of Swords (?), 6 of Swords. The regular pack is dated 1613 on the 2 of Swords; both packs by 'alla Colonna', Rome; Lady Charlotte Schreiber Collection, British Museum. The Maid of Swords in both packs holds a shield with the Colonna arms. See pp. 20, 320, 379, 393-4 and 399

24. Sicilian 'Portuguese'-suited regular pack, 1639

Top row: Ace of Coins, 6 of Batons, King of Batons; *middle row*: Cavalier of Swords, 7 of Cups; *bottom row*: 4 of Cups, 7 of Coins, 7 of Swords. These are all the surviving cards of a pack, not previously illustrated, in the Museo Etnografico Giuseppe Pitré, Casina Cinese, Parco della Favorita, Palermo (catalogue no. G.E. 3180); photograph by G. Armao, reproduced by kind permission of Professor Gaetano Falzone, Director of the Museum. See pp. 20 and 379

25. Tarocchi siciliani (*top three rows*: older form, six by Tuzzolino and six by F. Cimino; *bottom row*, modern, by Concetta Campione)

Top row: Poverty (*Povertà*), IIII Constancy (*Costanza*), XI Hanged

Man, XIIII the Ship (*il Vascello*); *second row, two cards at left*: XX Jupiter (*Jove*), Cavalier of Coins. These six cards are by Tuzzolino, presumably of Palermo, *c.* 1790, S. Mann Collection (M. Dummett co-owner). *Second row, two cards at right*: Maid (*Donna*) of Swords, Queen of Swords; *third row*: 10 of Cups, Maid of Batons, 5 of Swords, 5 of Batons. Six cards from pack by Felice Cimino of Palermo, 1802, in the Museo Pitré, Palermo (catalogue no. 3508), photographed by G. Armao and reproduced by kind permission of Professor G. Falzone. Note the absence of indices on the Queen and 10, and the dog's heads on the Batons and Swords (compare the 7 of Swords in plate 24). *Bottom row*: Poverty (*Miseria*), 11 Hanged Man; from pack by Concetta Campione of Catania, *c.* 1955, in S. Mann Collection. See pp. 371-6

26. Cards from the Tarot pack by Catelin Geoffroy, 1557

Top row: I Bateleur, II Popess; *middle row*: IIII Emperor, VII Chariot, IX Hermit, XII Hanged Man, XIII Death; *bottom row*: XIIII Temperance, XVI Lightning, XX Judgment. The pack was made in Lyons, and is in the Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main (catalogue no. K 1). See pp. 203-4

27. *Above and left*: seventeenth-century Parisian Tarots

Top row: Fool (le Fous), I le Bateleur, IX Hermit (l'Ermite), XVI the Lightning (la Fouldre); *middle row*: XX the Judgment (le Iugement), XXI the World (le Monde). From a pack in the Réserve des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (catalogue no. Kh 34). The cards measure 69 x 127 mm; see pp. 207-8

Below: Tarot cards by J. Viévil of Paris, mid-seventeenth century
Middle row: 2 of Coins, Ace of Coins; *bottom row*: 2 of Cups, XIII Temperance, XV Devil, XVI Lightning. The last three cards have not been previously reproduced. Compare plates 30 and 31. See pp. 205-7. The cards measure 63 x 125 mm, and are in the same volume, Kh 34, as the anonymous Parisian pack above

28. Tarot de Marseille 1760

Bateleur (I), Popess (II), Empress (III), Emperor (IIII), Pope (V), Chariot (VII), Hermit (VIIII), Strength (XI), Hanged Man (XII), Devil (XV), Moon (XVIII), Judgment (XX), King of Cups, Queen of Batons, Cavalier of Swords, Jack of Coins; from a pack by Nicolas Conver of Marseilles in S. Mann Collection

29. *Top row*: eighteenth-century Lombard pattern IT-1·1

Fool, Popess (II), Tower (*Maison Dieu*) (XVI), Moon (XVIII); from a pack by Angelo Marisi (trade-name 'alla Colomba') of Bologna in S. Mann Collection. See pp. 196-7 and 412-13

Middle row: single-figure Milanese pattern IT-1·3
Bagatto (I), Tower (XVI); from a nineteenth-century pack made in Switzerland in S. Mann Collection. See p. 412

Bottom row: double-headed Milanese pattern IT-1·31
Devil (XV), Moon (XVIII); from a pack by Fratelli Armanino of Genoa in S. Mann Collection

30. *Top row*: Tarot de Besançon, IT-1·4

Juno (II), Jupiter (V), the Devil (XV), the Moon (XVIII); from a pack by Renault of Besançon, *c.* 1800, in S. Mann Collection. See pp. 217-18

Second and third rows: Belgian Tarot

Spanish Captain (II), Bacchus (V), Chariot (VII), Devil (XV), Lightning (XVI), the World (XXI), Queen of Cups, Jack of Batons; from a pack by Jean Galler of Brussels, *c.* 1755, in S. Mann Collection. Compare plates 27 and 31; see pp. 208-10

Bottom row: modern Swiss Italian-suited Tarot, IT-1·41

Jupiter (V), Hermit (VIIII), Devil (XV), King of Cups; from a contemporary pack by J. Müller of Schaffhausen in S. Mann Collection. See pp. 220, 412

31. 'Belgian pattern' Tarot pack made in Rouen, seventeenth century

2 of Cups, Bateleur (I), Spanish Captain (II), Emperor (III), Ace of Coins, 2 of Coins, Empress (IIII), Bacchus (V), Chariot (VII), Justice (VIII), Hermit (IX), Wheel of Fortune (X), Hanged Man (XII), Temperance (XIIII), Devil (XV), Lightning (XVI); from a pack by Adam C. de Hautot of Rouen in David Temperley Collection. Compare plates 27 and 30; see pp. 208-10

32. *Top two rows*: Tarocco Piemontese (*top row*: intermediate form IT-1·21; *second row*: modern IT-1·211)

Top row: Fool, Hanged Man (XII), Tower (XVI), Judgment (XX); from a pack by Fantini of Novara, *c.* 1865, in S. Mann Collection. *Second row*: Empress (3), the Lovers (6), the Chariot (7), the Hermit (9); from a pack by Modiano of Trieste, 1943, in S. Mann Collection. See pp. 196, 412

Bottom two rows: Trappola pack, Prague 1816

King of Swords, Jack of Coins, Jack of Batons, Cavalier of Cups, Ace of Coins, Ace of Cups, Deuce of Batons, Deuce of Swords; from a pack by Jakob Wokaun of Prague, 1816, in S. Mann Collection. See pp. 356-7

33. *Top three rows*: standard modern Austrian Tarock cards (*top row*: type A; *second row*: type B; *third row*: type C)

Top row: Tarocks II and III, Jack of Diamonds, Cavalier of Spades; from a pack by Pierwaza Gal. Fabr. Kart. do Gry, Lwow, *c.* 1900, in S. Mann Collection. *Second row*: Tarocks II and III, Cavalier of Clubs, Sküs; from a pack by Ferd. Piatnik & Söhne of Vienna, *c.* 1950, in S. Mann Collection. *Third row*: Tarocks II and III, Queen of Diamonds, King of Spades; from a pack by Česká Grafická 'Unie' of Prague, *c.* 1935, in S. Mann Collection. The designs common to the court cards of the three types were established by about 1860. Type A (FT-2·1 in the Playing-Card Society classification) emerged in the 1860s, and was made in Vienna, Budapest and Lwow (and perhaps elswhere); it did not survive the First World War. Many of its designs were taken from an early nineteenth-century pack depicting named regional costumes. Type B (FT-2·2), in the same style, but with different designs on the trumps, was probably established *c.* 1865. It was made in Graz, Vienna and Budapest, and is still produced in the last two of these cities, being in common use in Austria and Hungary. Type C (FT-2·3) originated *c.* 1890 and was, and still is, made in Vienna and Prague; it is still in common use in Austria and Czechoslovakia. Tarocks II and III serve as the chief means of distinguishing between the three types; the falcon in place of the eagle on Tarock II is a Czech peculiarity. Note the Austrian manner of placing the numerals on the body of the main design. All these patterns are known chiefly in the 54-card form, but B and C also occur in a 42-card form, and C, occasionally, with 78 cards

Bottom row: the 'bourgeois' pattern of French-suited Tarots
Tarocks 2 and 15, Jack of Clubs, Cavalier of Diamonds; from a pack by A.S.S. of Altenburg, *c.* 1935, in S. Mann Collection. This pattern (FT-3 in the Playing-Card Society classification) was introduced in the mid-nineteenth century, originally for 78-card packs, by one of the companies ancestral to A.S.S., perhaps one in Stralsund or, more probably, Wüst of Frankfurt. It spread to France and Switzerland, in both of which countries it is now the only French-suited Tarot pattern in use. In Germany it came to be used for 54-card packs, and is now one of two used for Cego cards. Note the panel for the numerals on the trump cards, in accordance with the German practice for French-suited Tarots. See pp. 220, 288, 439

34. Animal Tarots (*top two rows*: Bavarian; *bottom two rows*: Belgian)

Top two rows: King of Spades, Cavalier of Diamonds, Tarocks X and XVIII, Queen of Clubs, Jack of Clubs, Tarocks XIV and XVI; from a Bavarian Animal Tarot pack by Andreas Benedictus Göbl of Munich, *c.* 1790, in S. Mann Collection. This pattern, designated FT-1 in the Playing-Card Society classification, was the earliest of the Animal Tarots, originating about 1765-70 and continuing in use until about 1860. It is known only in 78-card form. See p. 219. *Bottom two rows*: Jack of Clubs, King of Clubs, trumps XII and XX, Queen of Spades, Cavalier of Diamonds, trumps VIII and XVIII; from a Belgian Animal Tarot pack by P.A. Keusters of Brussels, *c.* 1780, in S. Mann Collection. The Belgian Animal Tarot pattern, FT-1·1 in the Playing-Card Society classification, emerged soon after the Bavarian one, and lasted until about 1880. It is known only in 78-card form. See p. 219

35. Animal Tarots (*top row*: upper Austrian; *second row*: South Tyrol; *third row*: Baltic; *bottom row*: modern Cego)

Top row: King of Spades, Queen of Clubs, Tarocks V and XVI; from an upper Austrian Animal Tarot pack by Jakob Wokaun of Prague, *c.* 1816, in S. Mann Collection. This pattern, FT-1·2 in the Playing-Card Society classification, is known only in a double-headed version; it may have originated as late as 1810, and continued to be made in Bohemia until at least 1858. Originally with 78 cards, later examples have only 54. Note the Austrian style of placing the numerals on the trumps. *Second row*: King of Hearts, Queen of Clubs, Tarocks XIX and XX; from a Tyrolean Animal Tarot pack made by Karl Albrecht of Bolzano in the early nineteenth century. Deutsches Spielkarten Museum, Leinfelden. This pattern existed for about thirty or forty years during the middle of the nineteenth century, and was made in Innsbruck and Bolzano; it is that referred to on p. 466 as perhaps having sometimes been made in a 66-card form. *Third row*: Queen of Diamonds, Jack of Hearts, trumps 1 (Pagat) and 12; from a Baltic Animal Tarot pack probably made in Lübeck, *c.* 1790, in S. Mann Collection. This was made in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in an area centring upon Lübeck, and is known only in the 78-card form. *Bottom row*: King of Diamonds, Jack of Hearts, Trucks 3 and 12; from a Cego pack by A.S.S. of Leinfelden, 1974, in S. Mann Collection. This, one of the two patterns used for Cego packs (the other is the 'bourgeois' pattern, plate 33), is the only surviving type of Animal Tarot pattern

36. Cartomantic Tarot packs

Top row: a later reprint of Grand Etteilla I

21 (corresponding to the Chariot and signifying *Dissension* (discord) whether upright or reversed), 24 (corresponding to the Cavalier of Batons, and signifying *Départ* (departure) upright and *Désunion* (disunion) reversed), 2, representing the second element (fire) and the first day of creation (corresponding to the Sun and signifying *Éclaircissement* (elucidation) upright and *Feu* (fire) reversed), and 4, representing the third element (air) and the second day of creation (corresponding to the Star, and signifying *Dépouillement* (spoliation) upright and *Air* reversed); from a pack by B.P. Grimaud of Paris, 1979, lent by Stanley Gibbons & Co. See pp. 108-11

Middle row: a modern edition of Wirth's designs

The Chariot (VII), the Fool, the Wheel of Fortune (X), the Devil (XV); from a modern pack by Tchou Productions of Paris, lent by Stanley Gibbons & Co. The pack is distributed in the United States by U.S. Games Systems, Inc., of New York; the Major Arcana reproduce the second version, of 1927, of Oswald Wirth's designs; see pp. 126, 133

Bottom row: pack designed by Pamela Coleman-Smith for A.E. Waite.

The High Priestess (II), the Knight of Pentacles, the Page of Cups, Death (XIII); from a pack published by Rider and Co. of London, 1910, in S. Mann Collection; often known as the Rider-Waite Tarot. See pp. 154-5

Thanks are due to the institutions and individuals who are the owners of the cards illustrated in plates 3, 5-10, 13-19, 21, 23-7, 31, 35 and 36, and of the paintings illustrated in plates 11 and 12, for their kind permission to reproduce photographs of items in their possession.

Preface

This book is about a card game played with a celebrated type of pack; to speak more exactly, about a family of card games played with a number of related types of pack. We have a deep ambivalence about games. In all places and at all periods a large proportion of men's time is spent in playing games of one sort and another, or in watching others play them; they absorb a large proportion of men's energy and attention, and, nowadays, consume a great deal of money. And yet, because we have at the back of our minds a contrast between play and work, because we think of a game as something that by definition is not serious, we are loth to allow that games are worthy of serious investigation. A good illustration of this can be found by looking at any of those books that attempt to survey every aspect of a particular country, Korea, say, or Mexico. There will be chapters on its physical geography, its history, its principal industries, its religion, its language and literature. There will be cultural chapters, describing town and village architecture, interior decoration, music, dance, dress, cookery and marriage and burial customs, all carefully and accurately delineated; and tucked away in the middle of all this will be two sketchy and ill-informed paragraphs about games. But a game may be as integral to a culture, as true an object of aesthetic appreciation, as admirable a product of human creativity as a folk art or a style of music; and, as such, it is quite as worthy of study. With games there is a wider gulf between composition and execution than with any other art form. Those who excel in the skilful play of a game achieve a merited celebrity, because, whatever intellectuals may think, people generally recognise in such skill a form of human achievement. But those who invent games are seldom known by name; and, whether or not they are identifiable, few think to give them the credit that they deserve. Yet the invention or the improvement of a game is also an achievement of high value, calling for an unusual talent. There could never have been an Alekhine or a Capablanca had there not first been the unknown genius who invented chess, or those who, over the many centuries of its history, perfected its rules. Of course, it is very rare that anyone invents a totally new game: the important steps in the history of games consist for the most part of the introduction into some existing game of a radically new idea. But new ideas, particularly good new ideas, are very hard to come by, as anyone can testify who has ever tried to invent a game or improve an existing one.

Among all the various types of game, card games are those which we are least disposed to consider worthy of serious study. This is probably in large part due to their indissoluble connection with gambling, which has at many times and in all places made them the subject of official disapprobation and often of actual prohibition. The connection is indissoluble, not only because, given the universal predilection for gambling, a pack of playing cards makes a highly convenient randomising device for use in pure gambling games, but also because of the nature of those card games which are not in essence gambling games. Most board games are two-person games, and of their nature permit of only two or three possible outcomes – a win for one or other player or possibly a draw; if there is great disparity between the players, this is most easily remedied by a handicap. But almost all card games are of a kind in which much of the interest would be destroyed if the question were only one of which player or side had won and which had lost. Their scoring systems necessitate consideration of by how much each player wins or loses; and this makes it all but inevitable that winnings and losses should be registered by monetary payments, however little of a gambling spirit may prevail among the players.

Whether or not this association with gambling be the reason, it is certain that the history of card games has not presented itself to scholars as a subject fit for their attention. Chess is acknowledged by all as a serious intellectual pursuit, and the glory of chess to some degree spills over on to other board games. Their history has therefore been the object of some learned studies by a small body of devoted scholars, including the great Dr Thomas Hyde, Bodley's Librarian and Professor of Arabic at the University of Oxford, with his *De Historia Shahiludii* of 1689 and *De Historia Nardiludii* of 1694, the Dutch nineteenth-century historian of chess, Antonius van der Linde, and H.J.R. Murray, with his monumental and definitive *History of Chess* of 1913 and his *History of Board Games other than Chess* of 1952. But card games are felt to be frivolous, and few scholars have thought them worthy of notice. The instruments of such games, playing cards themselves, have indeed been seriously studied, principally as an adjunct to the history of engraving and printing; but those scholars who have interested themselves in such objects have been largely concerned with their design and not their use. It should, however, be obvious that valuable clues concerning the history of playing cards are to be extracted from the history of the games played with them, just as, conversely, the history of playing cards often throws light upon the history of card games. In any case, if the invention and evolution of games is, in general, worth studying as an art form which has contributed to the sum of human happiness and in which human ingenuity and creativeness are brought into play, then card games, which include some of the most subtle ever devised, merit just as serious attention as board games.

I first became interested in the game of Tarot in the summer of 1967. It had been a potential interest of mine since childhood, when, looking at a compendium on the occult, I had read the chapter on fortune-telling with playing cards. This, besides explaining how to tell fortunes with regular playing cards, had also a section on the Tarot pack, from which I first learned of the existence of that pack, and which, in its introductory paragraphs, stated that Tarot cards were still used in central Europe for a complicated game of skill. This piece of information stuck in my mind; like many others, I was fascinated by the Tarot pack, and, though I had no belief in the capacity by its means to foretell the future, I was consumed with curiosity as to what sort of game could be played with it. From time to time over the years, it occurred to me to enquire about this from some expert on card games, and I once began a letter to Hubert Phillips on the subject, which, however, I never sent. And then, in the summer of 1967, when I was on holiday with my family in Normandy, I came across a Tarot pack '*avec règles du jeu*' in a shop in Honfleur, and eagerly bought it. My first surprise was that it was not what I then thought of as a 'proper' Tarot pack: it had the right court cards but the same suit-signs as in the familiar type of regular pack, and the trump cards did not have the right subjects depicted on them. I also had some trouble understanding the printed rules, because I was not at that time acquainted with the standard French terminology for card games; but we were much helped in mastering the game by my son Andrew's discovery of a booklet about it in a second-hand book shop. We then learned the game, and found it to be a very good one; but, when we returned to England, I still wanted to obtain a 'proper' Tarot pack with which I felt it would be much more picturesque to play. At that time, I found this much more difficult than I had anticipated, or than it would be now; but in the course of searching I came across something that puzzled me anew. This was an Austrian Tarot pack, manufactured by Piatnik and marketed by Benno Products, with a leaflet in English describing the game played with it. This resembled my French pack in using the familiar suit-signs and not having the traditional subjects on the trump cards; but it differed in having only 54 cards instead of 78, and the game described was markedly different, although plainly related. It dawned on me that the game was played in different ways in different countries; and I set myself the task of discovering the manner of play in each country in which the game was known.

A preliminary search among encyclopaedias and card-game books was discouraging, and so I returned to my original idea of writing to experts. This, too, was discouraging, largely because most of the experts whose names I knew turned out to have died in the last few years; those who were still alive knew nothing of the game of Tarot – one ventured the opinion that, since the pack was well known to have been invented for the purpose of fortune-telling, any game played with it must have been devised by some enterprising manufacturer. I did, however, receive two helpful responses. One was from Mrs Geoffrey Mott-Smith, the widow of one of the experts to whom I had written, who told me that, although she knew nothing about it herself, her husband had known a good deal about the game of Tarock, and invited me, whenever I should next visit New York, to call on her and look at his notes on the subject; when I later did so, she received me with great kindness, and it indeed proved that her late husband had known much about the history of card games, including Tarock.

The other helpful reply was from Miss Sylvia Mann, the foremost collector of playing cards in this country. By that time I had read her masterly and lucidly written book, *Collecting Playing Cards*, and had for the first time learned of the various suit-systems and of the true relationship of Tarot cards to regular ones. When I wrote to her, she knew little of the game of Tarot, but offered the assistance in my investigations of her great knowledge, unrivalled in its breadth, of the history of playing cards. Thus began a collaboration without which I should never have been able to write this book. Over the years she has been unstinting with help and advice. As I have come to know more of the subject, I have been able to make a few contributions to the history of playing cards myself, and I have particularly concentrated on matters to which evidence from literary sources is relevant; but I should not so soon have been able to do so, and should have made many blunders, had I not had a constant flow of accurate and detailed information supplied to me by Miss Mann. Indeed, although I owe her a quite particular personal debt, there is also a general debt owed to her by all students of playing cards: it is not too much to say that she first introduced order into the subject. Other playing-card collectors, being wealthier, have built up even finer collections than hers; and there have been, and are, scholars possessed of a more detailed knowledge of particular phases. But her great contribution has been to lay a firm foundation. The systematic study of the history of playing cards goes back to the work of the great eighteenth-century scholar Immanuel Breitkopf; but, amazing as it may seem, no articulated framework was provided for the subject until the publication in 1966 of Sylvia Mann's unpretentious volume referred to above. She was the first to draw a clear distinction, absent from the catalogues of any of the great collections of playing cards, between standard and non-standard cards: that is, between those of a kind normally used for playing, on the one hand, and, on the other, all other cards. The distinction may at first sight look to be an obvious one: but, obvious or not, it had not been drawn until Miss Mann drew it, and, once drawn it introduced a great clarity into the subject.

In fact, however, the distinction is not so obvious as at first appears, because standard cards may be differentiated from non-standard ones in either of two ways. The obvious distinction – though even this is not clearly drawn in the earlier books – is between cards whose design is largely or partly determined by some purpose extraneous to the use of cards to play card games, for instance that of advertising, political propaganda or educational instruction, and those whose design subserves no such further, albeit secondary, end. Not all those belonging to the latter category constitute standard cards, however. Among them, we must again distinguish between those which card players would regard as normal playing cards and those which they would see as special or as fancy, as *cartes de fantaisie*. And this, being a psychological distinction, is not always apparent from the cards themselves: to draw it, it is necessary to have historical knowledge. One must know what, at that time at which the cards were made, and in that place where, or, rather, for which, they were made, were regarded as the acceptable limits of variation in the design of normal playing cards: within those limits, we have standard cards, outside them non-standard ones – although occasionally what is a new non-standard design when first produced may become a standard one if it gains sufficient popularity.

Playing cards are very ephemeral objects, and so only a tiny proportion survive from former centuries; and, as a result, our knowledge is very patchy. Perhaps, of some design of which tens of thousands of samples were produced, only a handful of cards from a single pack may have come down to us. It is therefore not surprising that earlier writers had simply failed to draw the crucial distinction introduced by Sylvia Mann between standard and non-standard cards; not, indeed, that, having been introduced, it is always easy in practice to draw. But it is a crucial distinction. Isolated experiments in playing-card design occur again and again, and are often of great beauty and therefore of interest to those for whom the study of playing cards is an adjunct of art history; but they have no significance for the history of playing cards as such. That acknowledged, how can we apply the distinction to early periods from which we have so few examples that we cannot readily tell what was customary and what exceptional? Hard as this is to do, it has been made a great deal easier by the realisation that, at all places and times, standard playing cards conform to one or another standard pattern, another concept introduced, in its generality, by Miss Mann. In present-day Britain or the United States, anyone can differentiate between standard and non-standard cards: standard cards are restricted, within very narrow limits, to a conventional design which forms the Anglo-American pattern, and any others are either foreign (or, in the United States, 'ethnic') or non-standard. And in contemporary Italy, Germany and other European countries, there are other, quite different, but equally stereotyped national or regional patterns, *Bilder* in German, *portraits* in French. Such standard patterns are known and recognised by both manufacturers and card players, identified by name on the box and asked for by name by the purchaser. Others, however, have no accepted name, and there is no such general consciousness of them: only the systematic study of playing cards can isolate them, discriminate them from one another and trace their history; and it was not until very recently that this work was begun, a work that could be begun only when the concept of a standard pattern had been generalised from those that were well known and consciously recognised. What earlier researchers had failed to grasp, or, at least, clearly to enunciate, is that the stereotyping of playing-card design into standard patterns that then evolve only so gradually that the changes pass unnoticed by card players is a universal law, whether those patterns are consciously distinguished from others used elsewhere or are merely unconsciously accepted as the norm. Only by the introduction of the general concept of standard patterns could there be a basis for a systematic taxonomy of standard playing cards, a work now being undertaken by the Playing-Card Society of which Miss Mann was the first President. When we go back to the earliest times in the history of playing cards, there is little hope of identifying for certain the cards that exhibit standard patterns, and distinguishing them from occasional variants or sports; but at least we are now clear about the content of our speculations when we conjecture that some early pack was or was not standard.

This book is not much concerned with details of standard patterns or their histories; nevertheless, such knowledge is often useful in tracing the history of a game with which some one such pattern had become associated, and such knowledge as I have I owe largely to Miss Sylvia Mann. Indeed, this book – the present Preface excepted – is to be regarded as a work of collaboration. I have done the actual writing, which Miss Mann has checked, making numerous helpful suggestions and corrections. In the very few cases in which there has been a divergence of opinion, it is my opinion that has been set down; I have wished to take the responsibility for the assertions made, and mistakes that readers discover are therefore not to be imputed to Miss Mann. The work on documentary sources and on the rules of games has been mine; but the sections on the history of playing cards are the outcome of a co-operative endeavour, extending over a decade. I have been able to make some discoveries in this area, such as those set out in Chapters 9 and 19, and have propounded some theories, to be found in Chapters 2, 3 and 20. But at every step I have been able to rely upon the stream of information with which she has provided me; and I have been stimulated by the equally constant flow of suggestions and ideas she has put forward, informed by an extremely sound judgment based on an almost unequalled knowledge of the subject. A great deal of what is said in this book about the history of playing cards is therefore due to her, and hence also a great part of the credit. The book is a work of collaboration in that the acknowledgment I am here making for Miss Mann's profound and indispensable contributions is not echoed, in the text, by particular acknowledgments. If it were, those parts of the book that relate to the history of playing cards would be crammed with clauses of the form 'as Miss Mann has pointed out', 'as was discovered by Miss Mann' and 'I owe this information to Miss Mann', to an extent that would be tedious to the reader. To spare the reader this tedium, I have incorporated many observations originally made by her or that I could not have made save on the basis of information supplied by her, thinking it better to instruct the reader at the outset that to her is due much of the credit for what is said about the history of the cards, on which depend many deductions about the history of the games played with them.

I owe a great debt also to Mr John McLeod, an enthusiast for games of all kinds. Quite independently of me, though starting a few years later, he became interested in European card games of all kinds, including Tarot games, and founded a circle of players in Cambridge. His knowledge of the literature on card games is considerable, though we have specialised in different ways and I have devoted much more attention to literary sources; he is a better card player than I am, and has a good deal more experience of actual play. I have benefited greatly from discussions with him about the intepretation of the rules of various games and about their history. I am also indebted to him for detailed information concerning Tarock games he played on a visit to Austria and Tarot games he took part in with French players, and, more recently, indeed while this book was in press, for the information forthcoming from a visit he undertook at my suggestion to Sedrun, in Switzerland, to check the information I had on the contemporary Swiss game, and from an immediately subsequent visit, on his own initiative, to Turin. In particular, I owe him many thanks for having read through all the chapters concerned with games, and making many valuable suggestions on points of exposition and of fact; this has been especially helpful in connection with the Austrian games, which he knows rather better than I do.

I do not think that I should ever have become so gripped by this investigation as I was had it not been for political events. When I first became interested in it, I was deeply involved in work to combat that racism which has, over the past fifteen years, disfigured our national life and dishonoured our country. 1967 was, from that standpoint, a disturbing and discouraging year, for it was the year at the end of which the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, the only body which has ever appeared capable of creating a united national movement to oppose racial prejudice and discrimination, was violently torn apart. It was, too, the year in which I had the honour to be among those who, partly foreseeing the end of C.A.R.D., laboured to bring to birth the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, which, in the last twelve years, has done so much to help individuals enmeshed in the net of our cruel and racially motivated immigration laws. 1968 was the most terrible year that I hope I ever have to live through. In the United States it was the year in which Nixon was elected President for the first time: I spent three months there, arriving about three weeks before the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King, and leaving one week after the assassination of Robert Kennedy, who I believe might really have saved that country. In Britain it was the year in which the Labour Party, then in power, finally declared itself willing to go to any lengths to promote racism in this country for the sake of supposed electoral advantage by rushing through Parliament in one week the most shameful Act ever passed, that Commonwealth Immigrants Act which took the hitherto unprecedented step of denying entry to our own citizens – to those who from no possible viewpoint could be regarded as other than our own citizens, to those who had been consciously and deliberately offered our citizenship, to people to whom we had, in the words of the then Home Secretary, Mr Callaghan, in recommending the Bill, contracted 'solemn obligations' – of turning those of our citizens who had the misfortune to have a skin-colour the voters were presumed not to like into people who had no place on the face of the globe where they were legally entitled to go. I took part in a march organised by J.C.W.I. to protest against the Bill, and saw the hatred on the faces of the Government supporters who lined Whitehall shouting 'Wogs, go home', as if the whole point of the Bill were not to deny a home to those who came to be called, even by the sympathetic, 'British passport-holders', as though they had got hold of their passports by some underhand means. Within a month Enoch Powell had made the most notorious of his many speeches designed to inflame racist feeling, a speech whose content could not be rebutted by either of the major parties without frustrating their whole strategy of appearing to sympathise with racist feeling, although the leader of the Conservative Party did reprimand him for his manner of expression, and a speech whose effect on the attitude of white people around them must have been felt within twenty-four hours by every black person in the country. By the end of the year, at Christmas time, it was possible for Mr Merlyn Rees, as a junior Minister at the Home Office, to appear on television and assure the British public that he would 'get rid of' a family of children, British citizens from East Africa separated from their parents by the new law, a promise that evoked no sentimental allusions to room at the inn. Britain had indeed been converted into a racist country.

To those of us who had for some time been engaged in attempting to combat racism the emotional strain and distress of those two years were severe. I found it almost impossible to do any more work on philosophy or logic than my teaching duties made essential: apart from the difficulty of finding the extended periods of time necessary for such work, both subjects present themselves as wholly serious; and, in a time of such crisis, it seemed impossible to devote any energy available for serious work to anything so remote from the concerns of most people when there were so much more urgent calls upon it. But when one is engaged in what produces constant emotional anxiety, there is a need for some kind of refuge, and my new hobby became for me such a refuge. It presented sufficiently difficult and sufficiently intriguing problems to exercise the mind, but provoked no anxiety and seemed too far removed from serious concerns to compete with either my academic or my political work; it became a necessary recreation for me, almost a drug that could alone confer for an hour or two a peace of mind that was otherwise absent. I have, indeed, continued to pursue it long after I ceased to need any such refuge, and have transformed it from a recreation into a piece of research which, although only a hobby, was still undertaken as conscientiously as possible; but I doubt if I should ever have become so absorbed with it as to carry it so far had it not in the first place been for a time an emotional necessity for me.

Britain and the Iberian peninsula are almost the only two regions of Europe in which the game of Tarot has never been played. Even of these regions one should say 'virtually never'. On p. 238 of his *Travels through Spain and Portugal* (London, 1775), Richard Twiss mentions an evening spent at the house in Granada of the marchioness of Casablanca, 'where we were entertained with a concert, and afterwards with cards: part of the company played at whist, part at piquet, and the rest at various Spanish games with a peculiar kind of cards, much resembling those used in Switzerland, and known by the name of *cartes de taraut*'; and a Tarot de Marseille pack in the Douce Collection in the Bodleian Library, made in Marseilles in 1760 by François Bourlion, bears a note by Douce saying 'brought from Spain by Mr Twiss'. Likewise James Cleland, in his '*Ηρω-Παιδεια, or the Institution of a Young Nobleman* (Oxford, 1607), says: 'His Maiesties permission of honest house-games, as Cardes, French Cardes called Taraux, Tables and such like plaies, is sufficient to protect you from the blame of those learned men, who thinke them Hazards' (book V, chap. 24; quoted by E.S. Taylor, *The History of Playing Cards*, London, 1865, p. 278). But such occasional references do not controvert the proposition that neither in Spain nor in England has the game ever been generally known.

The Tarot pack is now very widely known in this country, indeed in nearly every country, as an instrument of prediction and a document of the occult. It would have been good if those with a taste for magic could have kept their hands off what does not belong to them: they have an abundant literature of their own. When they first appropriated to themselves the Tarot pack, it was only an absurdity; now that they have persuaded the world at large that it was theirs from the beginning, it has become exceedingly irritating. 'Serious' occultists affect to disdain the use of the cards to foretell the future, while still claiming predictive power as one of their magical properties; but, wherever occultist theories of the Tarot take hold, the practice of fortune-telling with them flourishes. It is a mistake to view it as a harmless piece of nonsense. Consider, for instance, the sample Tarot reading, for a young woman wondering whether to accept a proposal of marriage, supplied by S.R. Kaplan in Chapter XVI of his *The Encyclopedia of Tarot* (New York, 1978): she is to be advised that her suitor is insincere and would not give her the love she desires, and that she ought therefore to break with him. People who take this superstition seriously may ruin their lives by following the advice they receive from the cards. Those who originally promoted belief in it shared that belief themselves, and were thus doing harm only unwittingly; it is difficult to suppose that all who promote it nowadays have even that excuse.

It will be obvious to anyone who glances at it that this book is primarily concerned with games played with Tarot cards. I have, however, written the opening chapters as for a reader who comes to the subject with an open mind, so as to allow him to discover from the evidence as I have set it out for what purpose the Tarot pack was invented and how it came to be associated with the occult. In particular, I have devoted a long chapter to the antics of the occultists up to about 1920. Any study of their writings and their activities must bring out how impossible it is for a modern occultist to avoid intellectual dishonesty, something that was not true of his predecessors in the Renaissance; examples will be found repeatedly in Chapter 6. Occultist theories of the Tarot, in particular, are simply inconsistent with the ascertainable facts about the history of the cards; those who wish to encourage such theories are therefore compelled to distort or gloss over the facts. The book by Mr Kaplan cited above is an example of this. Its object, as stated on p. xiii, is to bridge the gap between the occultist and the art historian. The result has inevitably been equivocation. In non-sensitive areas, that is, where presentation of the historical facts will not disturb the preconceptions of the occultist, particularly in the chapters on the fifteenth-century hand-painted cards, there is indeed serious historical discussion, and I have cited Kaplan's views on these topics, sometimes in agreement, sometimes in disagreement. But the book as a whole is organised in such a way as to conceal from all but the most alert of those readers previously unaware of it the fact that, before 1781, Tarot cards were never used for any purpose other than to play card games, at least until such readers arrive at the very last chapter, which occupies a single page. This is effected by a historically inaccurate differentiation between the French word *tarot* and its German equivalent *Tarock*: Latin-suited packs are referred to as 'tarot decks', without any distinction between cartomantic ones and those intended for play, while French-suited ones are designated 'tarock packs', irrespective of country of origin, and the game is almost always referred to as 'tarock' and never as 'tarot'. Moreover, in the entire book no clue is given as to the date of invention of the French-suited form of the pack, which in fact originated in the eighteenth century. Chapter XIV, which deals with 'tarock packs', i.e. French-suited ones, begins thus: 'The game of tarock probably dates from the sixteenth century, possibly even the fifteenth century, and it continues in popularity today in certain sections of southwestern Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Early trumps were often highly artistic and depicted animals ... or full-length figures and scenes including operas, dancers, costumes ... Many of these early cards were hand stencilled.' The effect on the previously uninformed reader must be to make him suppose that the French-suited pack dates back to at least the sixteenth century, and that it alone was used for the game of tarock, the Italian-suited cards, including the fifteenth-century ones discussed at length in previous chapters, having been intended for some other purpose; from the context, he could not guess that the 'early trumps' referred to dated from after 1750. In his first two chapters, the second of which is entitled 'Origins of Tarocchi Cards', Kaplan includes a great deal of occultist material; he does not vouch for the theories he expounds, but he does not repudiate them either, and comes close to recommending them, as when he says, on p. 15, that one cannot dismiss the congruence between the 'Major Arcana' and the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and declares it interesting to speculate on their possible development from early alphabets, of which he provides a table to show their correspondence with the Tarot cards; it is not until the last page that he confesses that 'it seems doubtful that the *trionfi* derives (*sic*) from ... the Hebrew alphabet', a revelation for which nothing has prepared the reader. The gap between the occultist and the serious historian is unbridgeable, because occultist theories rest upon a whole spurious pseudo-history of the Tarot pack. To give its true history is, necessarily, to puncture those theories; any attempt to avoid puncturing them obliges one, at best, to fudge the facts.

This book represents the first attempt to describe in a single compass all the various forms of the game of Tarot, as played in different countries and regions; my aim has been to trace the history of each of these forms as completely as possible. I am writing at a time when, almost everywhere, this ancient and fascinating game is in decline: in Austria, in the city of Bologna and in the valleys of Switzerland it holds its own, and in France it is actually gaining in popularity, but almost everywhere else it is gradually ceasing to be played. I have become thoroughly accustomed to hear, from people of my own generation from different European countries of whom I have enquired about Tarock, 'I remember that my father used to play Tarock, but we all played Bridge'. Indeed, the same is true of many card games. Just as, throughout the world, clothes for men are now (with allowance for climate) almost everywhere the same, namely the rather nondescript garments that originated in the West, just as, if you switch the radio to a popular music programme in Accra or (probably) Montevideo or Kuala Lumpur, you will hear much the same noise that you hear in London or Amsterdam, so card playing is rapidly being reduced to flat uniformity. The world has been largely persuaded that, if you want to play cards seriously, there is only one game worth playing – Bridge. I do not want to criticise Contract Bridge. It is undoubtedly a very great game. But if one values other card games as manifestations of local cultures, Bridge is a menace: it drives out other games as the grey squirrel drove out the red squirrel; it deals the death blow to games that had survived for centuries. Even if one does not care a rap for cultural diversity, but single-mindedly considers the games simply as games, independently of their background, this is a pity. No one game can possibly exploit all the potentialities for play contained within the playing-card pack, just as no one board game could contain the virtues of all board games. It may be said that, if Bridge has triumphed, this must be due to its superiority as a game, and that it is therefore useless to resist. This would be to ignore the many extraneous factors, for instance the relative prestige of different cultures, that contribute to the formation of fashion. In any case, Bridge has not yet proved its superiority: its reign has as yet been far shorter than that of its great predecessor, Ombre; and who would regret that Ombre did not succeed in obliterating all other card games? Moreover, I do not wish to exaggerate. In Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Germany and elsewhere, there is still much resistance to the advance of Bridge; in France it remains the case that many more 32-card packs are sold than 52-card ones. But, compared even with how things stood in 1900, the game of Tarot is almost everywhere in retreat; and I have felt an anxiety to record its history before it becomes little more than a historical curiosity.

For forms of the game now obsolete, one can rely only on printed descriptions. Without the many books on card games that have been published, from the seventeenth century onwards, it would be impossible to trace the history of any card game; yet such books are very treacherous. When someone composes a treatise on a single game, you can usually trust what he says, although even then you need to take care, for it may be an unacknowledged reprint of a far earlier book. But the compiler of a comprehensive book of card games is in quite a different position. He may include in his book perhaps two hundred different games; and it is unthinkable that he should have learned them all from people who have inherited a continuous tradition of play. Only a very scrupulous writer will include only games that he has himself played; and even such a writer may, knowingly or unknowingly, be including games that he has played only with people who have learned them out of other books. In consequence, most compilers of card-game books plagiarise relentlessly and without acknowledgment. A description of a game may be transferred word for word, or often with some garbling due to undetected printer's errors, to one after another book by different authors, each claiming to be a wholly original work. Worse occurs when the author of a card-game book tries to summarise an earlier description of a game he has never in fact seen played: he will often misunderstand the earlier account and produce something unintelligible, or, worse still, intelligible but quite inaccurate. The result is that the fact that a game is described in a card-game book printed in a certain place at a certain date is very far from being good evidence that it was played in that fashion, or at all, in that place at that date. The only way to arrive at reasonable probability is to collect as many accounts from different books as one can, and then compare them carefully to determine which are derivative from which, and, if possible, what was the original source of any given account.

For existing games, actual observation of or participation in play with those who know the game is worth far more than written descriptions. My own opportunities for travel are limited, and, when one is in search of a game played only by a restricted circle of people, it is useless just to arrive somewhere and expect to find players on immediate enquiry: one has to seek out contacts long before the projected journey is made. Nevertheless, with the invaluable assistance of Mr John McLeod, it has been possible for me to ensure that most of the descriptions in this book of games that are currently played have been based on or checked against actual observations of or participation in play. The principal exception to this is the game of Taroky as now played in Czechoslovakia; in addition, I am uncertain whether the game is still played in Trieste, and, though I know it is played in Piacenza, I have no direct information about the mode of play there. I greatly hope that the publication of this book will prompt devotees of any form of the game to write to me to correct those errors that I dare not hope have not crept in, and to remedy omissions, of some of which I am aware. It will be fairest to the reader if I here make plain just how much direct observation has been possible. I have on a few occasions played Tarot with French players; though I cannot claim a very thorough direct knowledge of the French game, my friend Mr John McLeod has supplemented it by observations of his experience of games with French players. Through the kindness of Professor Gert Müller, I was introduced to some Cego players in the village of Oberwolfach in the Black Forest, and spent delightful hours playing with them, to whom my thanks are due. I have never played with, or even met, any Swiss players. However, in November 1978, when we were both attending a Convention of the Playing-Card Society held in Zurich, I suggested to Mr John McLeod, who was about to visit Stans to investigate the game of Kaiserspiel played there, that he make an expedition to the Romansh-speaking area of Graubünden, to discover something about Tarock as there played, since unfortunately I had not the time to remain in Switzerland after the Convention; he visited Sedrun, and returned with information that corroborated, but also amplified, what I already knew from an account of the game sent to me ten years before by AG Müller & Cie. I have myself met only two Austrian Tarock players, but have again been given a good deal of information by John McLeod, who has played different forms of the game with several different groups of people both in Vienna and in Linz. I have had the great good fortune to spend many extremely pleasant evenings playing Hungarian Tarokk with my friends Mr and Mrs Gabor Benscik and the late Dr B.A. Nyári, of New York, expert players who had continued to play the game ever since they arrived in New York from Hungary. I have never met a Czech player of Taroky; but I have played Tarok in Slovenia with Ing. Drago Matko and friends of his in Ljubljana, who with great kindness gave me information about modes of play elsewhere in Slovenia. I have not had the opportunity to visit Trieste. I have also not visited Piacenza, Como or Turin or its neighbourhood. However, here again Mr John McLeod has come to my help: after making the visit to Sedrun mentioned above, he went on, in the company of a friend from England living in Milan whom he had met at the Convention, to visit Turin and Pinerolo, and witnessed Tarocchi played in both places, as well as obtaining information about the manner of play at Como. I have, on the other hand, visited Bologna, with the help of a grant from the British Academy, for which my thanks are due. Through the kindness of many people there, in particular Commendator Giuseppe Ronchi and Signor Giampaolo Ferraresi, I received detailed explanations of the game from experienced players and witnessed many actual games, in some of which I took part. As for the Sicilian game, that has never been described in print: even the special pack of *tarocchi* cards used there was not, until recently, known to playing-card collectors and scholars. I first became aware of the pack when Miss Sylvia Mann game me one of those currently manufactured by the firm of Modiano in Trieste. It was obvious that there must be a special game played with these cards, and, after fruitless enquiries by other means, I decided that I could find out about the game only by visiting Sicily. Even if I had been unsuccessful, I should have been delighted at the chance which took me to that entrancing island. But, owing to the great kindness shown to me by everyone I met there, I succeeded, during two visits, in meeting players in what I believe to be the only three remaining towns where the Sicilian game is still played. Above all, I must single out for thanks my friend Dr Marcello Cimino, to whom this book is dedicated. A journalist on the left-wing newspaper *L'Ora* who has distinguished himself by his courage in exposing the Mafia, Dr Cimino has a deep love for his native land of Sicily and for its traditions. He also has, in an exceptional degree, that warmth towards and readiness to help strangers which I have always found characteristic of Italy and especially of Sicily. Although he is not himself a card player, and, at the outset, knew nothing of *tarocchi*, he went to an unbelievable amount of trouble to discover where the players of the game were to be found and to put me in touch with them. Without his help, I should have achieved nothing; with it, I was entirely successful, and gained a very good friend into the bargain. Many others showed me great kindness and gave me the most valuable help: I must mention especially the members of the Circolo 15 maggio at Calatafimi, who first explained the game to me; Signor Gaetano Di Bernardi, formerly of Calatafimi, now of Palermo, who answered many questions about it: Signor Nino Pino, of Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto, who was immensely kind and hospitable to my wife and me on our visit there, and also answered questions about the game; Signor Sebastiano Agliolo and his wife, of Patti, who conducted us on the difficult drive to Tortorici and supplied a delicious meal on our return at a very late hour; Avv. On. Gaetano Franchina, of Tortorici, who entertained us in his house and supplied me with invaluable information about the game as played now and in the past; Professor Gaetano Falzone, Director of the Pitré Museum, who supplied me with photographs and photocopies of cards in the Museum, and was of great assistance in other ways; Professor Romualdo Giuffrida, Superintendent of the Archivio di Stato, who also supplied me with microfilms and photographs; Professor Manfre, Director of the Biblioteca Communale, who helped me greatly on my visit there; Dr Giuseppe Quatriglio, who published a short piece by me in the *Giornale di Sicilia*, seeking contact with Sicilian players before my first visit (I had a response from Signor Giuseppe Pisano of Patti, but unfortunately he emigrated to Germany before I arrived in Sicily); Professor Aurelio Rigoli; and Professor Rosario La Duca. To all of them, and to others, my warmest thanks are due. With their help, I had explanations of the game as played in Sicily now and in the past, and was able both to witness and to take part in it.

Libraries have, of course, been indispensable to me, and I have been fortunate in being able to use the Bodleian Library in Oxford, which has, in the Jessel collection, one of the finest of all collections of card-game books, as well as the British Library, which it is unnecessary for me to praise. In the United States, I was able to make use of the Princeton University Library and, on one visit, with the help of my friend the late Boris Mandrovsky, one of the most intelligent and enthusiastic collectors of playing cards, of the Library of Congress. I found particularly useful the New York Public Library, which is not only one of the great libraries of the world, but is quite outstanding for the efficiency and courtesy of its service. A former librarian at the New York Public Library, Miss Gertrude Moakley, wrote a fascinating study of the most complete of the various fifteenth-century Italian hand-painted Tarot packs, that painted by Bonifacio Bembo for Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, perhaps the only good book about the Tarot pack ever written; and I had the great pleasure of meeting her in New York and the benefit of her deep learning concerning early Italian cards. Especially in the early stages of my work, I was greatly helped by the Cincinnati Art Museum, which has not only a major collection of playing cards but also an equally fine collection of books on card games. Miss Nancy Basket, now retired, formerly the Curator of the collection, was unfailingly obliging in sending me photocopies of sections from the books in the collection, and, later, when I made the first of two visits to Cincinnati. This book owes much to her and to the Museum. Later, I received similar help from the Deutsche Spielkarten-Museum at Bielefeld, which also had a notable collection of card-game books, and was greatly helped by its then Director, Dr Detlef Hoffmann, and its Secretary, Fräulein Erika Kroppenstedt. This museum has now been merged with the collection of V.A.S.S., the great German playing-card company, to form the Deutsche Spielkarten-Museum at Leinfelden, of which Dr Hoffmann is again the Director; and I have received much help from the present Secretary of the Museum, Frau Margot Dietrich. To Dr Hoffmann, who is also Curator of the Historische Museum in Frankfurt, I also owe the benefit of many stimulating discussions, particularly concerning fortune-telling with playing cards, on which he has done some very valuable research. I have also greatly profited from two visits to the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, which houses the world's finest collection of playing cards, consisting in large part of that built up by Melbert B. Cary, Jr. and containing two fifteenth-century hand-painted Tarot packs, one of them, the Visconti di Modrone pack, probably the earliest that survives to us. Mr William B. Keller, the cataloguer of the collection, was exceedingly kind and helpful to me; his catalogue, when published, will surely represent a great contribution to our knowledge.

I have also received much help from Dr Harold Wayland and Mrs Virginia Wayland, of Pasadena, California, both of them experts in the history of playing cards, who own a wonderful collection of photographs, taken by themselves, of ancient cards from museums all over the world. Mrs Wayland had, many years ago, undertaken a study of fifteenth-century Italian hand-painted cards, which, unfortunately, she never published; her analyses of the various sets, and her measurements of them, which she generously made available to me, were invaluable to me and underlie my own discussion of these early cards in this book. I have also profited greatly from exchanges of views with Mr Ronald Decker, an art historian who has specialised in the study of early Tarot cards, whose historical acumen is as great as his inventiveness in proposing iconographic interpretations. My warm thanks are also due to Signor Vito Arienti, of Lissone, near Milan, a distinguished playing-card collector who owns two examples of an important and otherwise unknown Sicilian *tarocchi* pack, and to Signor Gianpaolo Dossena, another Milanese playing-card enthusiast; both have showed me great kindness on visits to Italy, and both have sent me invaluable photocopies of books I had hitherto been unsuccessfully hunting for. I also owe very many thanks to Signor Marco Santambrogio, a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Bologna, who went to great trouble to pursue two enquiries which the brevity of my visits to Italy prevented me from completing personally. To Dr Hellmut Rosenfeld, a leading authority on the history of playing cards generally and an advocate, long before it became generally accepted, of the thesis that playing cards were introduced into Europe from the Islamic world, I owe many interesting opinions and items of information, both from his published writings and from private correspondence. To Dr David Hawkes I owe thanks for taking much trouble to help me with Chinese material, and to Dr Kamal Abu-Deeb gratitude for his part in our fruitful collaboration in the study of Islamic playing cards. I am grateful also to Mr László Jambor, Professor Nicholas Kurti, Dr Robert Evans, Mr Michael Konrad, Miss Anne Pennington and Dr Lorenzo Minio-Paluello for their kind help in translating for me from Hungarian, Czech and Slovene and from Italian when it got too difficult. Particular thanks are due to Dr Ernst Ragg, who, just before the book went to press, put me in touch with Ing. Matko of Ljubljana; I should otherwise have had to confess that Yugoslavia was the one country where Tarok is still played for which I had failed to discover anything about the manner of play. Mr Sid Sackson, a professional inventor of games, was at an earlier stage very kind, in particular obtaining from his father a translation of a Hungarian account of Tarokk. Many of the people mentioned here are members of the Playing-Card Society, and my work has been greatly helped by the many stimulating discussions and the continuous exchange of information for which the meetings of the Society provide opportunities; I owe thanks, in particular, to Mr David Temperley and Mr Trevor Denning for valuable information about playing cards, and to many other members of the Society too numerous to name here individually. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Miss Emma Fisher, for helping me to sort and file a great mass of notes and papers; without this, I could never have written this book.

Despite all this valuable help, the course of my investigations has not been uniformly smooth. An even greater menace than the plagiarism of compilers of card-game books is the irresponsibility of popular writers. By 'popular writers' I do not mean all those who write popular books and articles, but those who make that their profession. Popular writing – the exposition of specialist subjects to non-experts – is an indispensable part of the intellectual life of a society. All members of a society have a right to the knowledge that is in the possession of that society, and has usually been acquired by the expenditure of public money: if a subject is of value in itself, rather than a mere servant of technology, it demands to be made as accessible as possible to all who may take an interest in it. What is of value is not just that the knowledge should *exist*, but that people should *have* it: it is of as much value that a layman should grasp the general outlines of a subject as it is that a specialist should know it in detail. We have, in many fields, far too few popular books: and, in the less technical fields, it tends to be the wrong people who write them. In technical subjects, it remains obvious that only an expert can write a popular work, though it needs special gifts to do so; but, in non-technical fields, such as history of all kinds, this principle is increasingly ignored, though it is equally true. There is a new profession, that of the writer of popular books. He does not have a subject, he is not an expert on anything: just as the teachers' unions insist that a schoolteacher can teach any subject, so the professional popular writer is called upon by publishers to write on any subject, which he then 'gets up', or 'researches', by hastily reading a few general books about it, assisted by one of the so-called research agencies that have come into existence to serve the needs of authors like himself. Books produced in such a manner defraud the public: to all appearances, they are serious works, summarising for the general reader the conclusions of specialist research; in fact, their authors neither know nor care whether what their books contain is true.

The subject of playing cards and the games played with them has become an especial victim of this practice, because it occurs to publishers and authors as one on which it is easy to produce an attractively illustrated volume, and they assume that no one will care enough about the subject to be able, or wish, to complain of inaccuracies. Genuine experts for the most part confine themselves to specialist articles in learned journals. Some do still write general books, but these have to compete with the productions of the professional popular writers, which it is hard for the general reader to distinguish from them. Moreover, as already remarked, the experts are expert on the history of playing cards; since the death of Geoffrey Mott-Smith, there has scarcely been, among those who have published, an expert on the history of card games. So these twin subjects are bedevilled by a mass of books and articles containing statements lifted from out-of-date works, ill-founded guesses expressed as confident assertions, and outright inventions, all given without citing any source or authority that would enable them to be readily checked. As a result, legends, often introduced in good faith, have been incredibly persistent, endlessly copied into books, articles and museum catalogues by writers who could not take the trouble to verify them; and new ones are constantly engendered. A particularly fertile source of such legends concerning the Tarot pack was a book of 1831 by Count Leopoldo Cicognara, from which derive the tediously repeated stories of the invention of Tarot by Prince Fibbia and the painting of Tarot cards for Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, and the wearisome ascription of almost all fifteenth-century hand-painted Tarot cards to Antonio Cicognara or to Marziano da Tortona. Books written by authors who lack the knowledge needed for the task naturally mislead innocent readers. It was fortunate for me that by the time a well-intentioned expert on card games, appealing to Mr Alan Wykes's 'authoritative' book *Gambling* (London, 1964), told me that the game of Tarot had not been played since the fourteenth century, I already knew enough to disbelieve him. This statement occurs on p. 153 of Mr Wykes's book; after that date, he says, the Tarot pack was used only for telling fortunes. On p. 151 we learn that it was the earliest European playing-card pack, but used for play almost solely in Hungary, Italy, Spain and France, the earliest example being from Lombardy in the fourteenth century. On p. 152 it is stated that, when the Minchiate pack was invented, as a variation on the Tarot pack, the Fool was dropped from it, though retained as the Joker in packs from which the trumps and the Knights had been omitted to form the 52-card pack; we are also told that both the 97-card (i.e. Minchiate) and 78-card Tarot packs continued to be used for fortune-telling throughout Europe, and are still so used to-day, and that the French suit-signs were introduced in the fourteenth century. Every one of these statements embodies a gross error, recognisable as such by the merest beginner in the subject. Mr Wykes, to be sure, must have been in a hurry – he published five more books, on various subjects, in the next two years; but the general reader has a right to be treated with more respect.

If the subject is to advance, the habits of reiterating long-exploded theories and of making irresponsible and unfounded statements must be checked. For this reason, although I have passed over in silence most of the errors to be found in published works on the subject, I have picked out a few, especially liable to mislead, to be found in recent books. I myself have been made to waste many hours trying to verify what proved to be quite baseless assertions; when, on two occasions, I then appealed to their authors to make public corrections, they refused. If the subject is, as I think, worth studying, it is important to save others from accepting these erroneous statements, and from being put, like me, to pointless trouble; and it is even more important to establish a code of integrity such as prevails in other disciplines. There are, of course, many writers on playing cards who already conform to such a code; but there remain many who do not. Even when sources are given, they often prove to say nothing like what they are quoted as saying, so that, save for a few writers who are consistently reliable, it becomes necessary to verify every reference. Of course, anyone is liable to make mistakes, and I apologise in advance for those I have surely made, hard as I have tried to avoid them. Some of the errors that occur in the literature, however, seem hardly explicable by inadvertence. Only by checking all statements and exposing the false ones is there any chance of establishing standards which all who write about playing cards will feel obliged to try to live up to.

I hope that this book will stimulate some not previously familiar with Tarot games to sample them. The book is so arranged that, if you are not interested in the history of the cards, or even of the games, you can read the descriptions of the games without having to read anything else. To avoid repetitions, within each chapter the descriptions of particular games often rely on earlier descriptions in the same chapter of closely related games; but I have tried to make sure that, whenever this happens, there is a clear reference back. There are certain features which are common to all or most Tarot games. These are stated explicitly in Chapter 8, the second half of which therefore needs to be read before consulting any of the descriptions of particular games, especially since certain terms are there introduced and defined which are used without further explanation in the accounts of specific games. The General Rules of Chapter 8 assume that the reader knows the basic principles of trick-taking play; those readers who do not should first consult the account of it set out in Chapter 7. There are also certain features common to all, or to many, of the games described in Part IV, but not found in those described in Parts I and III. These are set out systematically at the beginning of Chapter 23, and certain terms are again introduced which are repeatedly used in that and later chapters, to avoid explaining the same thing each time; so, again, before reading any of the descriptions of games in Chapters 23 to 28, it will be necessary to read the General Rules at the beginning of Chapter 23.

In playing these games, I should strongly urge players, as far as they can, to make use of the authentic variety of pack. It would be possible, by suitable omissions of cards, to play every game other than Minchiate that is described in this book with a French Tarot pack; but not only would that destroy some of the charm of the games for which that pack is not designed: it would also be a kind of violation. After all, it would be possible to play Bridge with a set of cards bearing nothing but one of the letters A to D (or C, D, H, S) to indicate the suit, and a numeral from 1 to 13 (or 2 to 10 and J, Q, K, A); but no one would choose to do so. Many of the games here described have become entrenched in local cultures: Bolognese *tarocchi*, for instance, survives not only as being one of the most subtle and enjoyable card games ever invented, but as part of Bolognese life, as one among many things that are distinctive of Bologna. It would be ridiculous to think, for that reason, that no one elsewhere should play the game. But, in playing it, one is borrowing something from another culture, to which respect is due; and such respect involves playing it, as far as possible, in the same manner as do those to whom it belongs, and, in particular, with the type of cards they use: otherwise, one is not borrowing but stealing. Here is a game that was invented centuries ago, in a particular city; and we should know nothing of it had it not been preserved for centuries, in that city. It is played with a quite special type of pack, equally old, that is peculiar to that game, and has likewise been preserved, with very little change, for centuries by those who play it. To play the game with any other kind of cards would show a lack of respect for and gratitude to those to whose inventiveness and to whose own care for tradition we owe its present existence and our knowledge of it. When one first uses an unfamiliar pack of cards, one may find it difficult to identify them rapidly; but this difficulty is quite superficial, and is very soon overcome with a little practice. At one time it was hard to obtain foreign playing cards. But now almost any cards that are currently manufactured in any part of the world can be readily obtained, for instance from Mr

Maurice Collett, of Kendal Playing Card Sales, 3 Oakbank House, Skelsmergh, Kendal, Cumbria. If anyone should wish to try the games described in Chapter 9, a Tarot de Marseille pack, with Italian suits and 78 cards, would be suitable. For those of Chapter 10, one could use a Swiss 78-card pack with Italian suit-signs. The French Tarot nouveau (with 78 cards and French suits) is needed for the games of Chapter 15, and either it or its Swiss cousin for those of Chapters 11, 12 and 14. The Tarocco Piemontese pack is required for the games of Chapter 13, the Tarocco Bolognese one for those of Chapter 16, and the Tarocco Siciliano for those of Chapter 19. For the games of Chapter 17 the Minchiate pack is needed, but this is not currently available, and there is no way of constructing any substitute for it (save by using two 78-card packs and altering the faces of many of the trumps). The Trappola pack, needed for the games described in Chapter 18, is also unobtainable at present, but in this case one can improvise by using a regular 52-card pack of any of the Italian-suited patterns and omitting the 3s, 4s, 5s and 6s, or by using a Tarocco Piemontese pack and omitting also the Queens and the trumps. For the game described in Chapter 24 one needs a Cego pack (with French suits and 54 cards), and, for the games of Chapters 22, 23, 25, 26 and 27, an Austrian Tarock pack (again with 54 cards and French suits). Finally, for the German games of Chapter 28, a 36-card Bavarian pattern German-suited pack and a 36-card German French-suited one are required; but for the American Frog and Solo games, derived from Tapp, one will naturally use English cards. Tarot games would not be worth playing if they were not, independently of their history, excellent games, many of which not only rival Bridge in strategic interest but far surpass it in the variety of situations that can occur. But part of the charm of playing them must lie in an awareness of their antiquity and in their unfamiliar flavour, a flavour in part destroyed if one is content to use the wrong type of cards when the right one is available.

Not being myself a particularly good card player, I have not presumed to add to the length of this already lengthy book by putting in a great deal of advice on strategy; most Tarot games do not lend themselves to the formulation of cut-and-dried rules for successful play, and players to whom the game is new will have to discover strategic principles by experience. I cannot hope to have avoided all mistakes, and, comprehensive as I have tried to make this book, there must be several variants I have omitted. I hope, most sincerely, that any reader who knows one or another form of the game and who spots an error or deplores the absence of some variant of which he is fond will not rest content with complaining about it to his friends, but will take the trouble to write to me and point out my mistake or omission, so that I can correct it, with due acknowledgments, for a later edition.

PART ONE

HISTORY AND MYSTERY

CHAPTER 1

The Tarot Pack in Playing-Card History

In his notes to *The Waste Land*, T.S. Eliot wrote, 'I am not familiar with the exact constitution of the Tarot pack'; he evidently did not expect his readers to be, either. Now, just over half a century later, probably most people in Britain and the United States either have actually seen a Tarot pack or have at least seen pictures of the cards: specimens of the pack, and books about it, are on sale everywhere; articles about it appear in the newspapers, and it has figured in a James Bond film. Few, indeed, could give much of an account of the significance of the Tarot pack or its relation to ordinary playing cards. Almost everyone would be likely to say, 'It's used for fortune-telling, isn't it?', which is true as far as it goes, but, as we shall see, conveys an impression at variance with the true history of the cards. But, for the moment, let us postpone an enquiry into the use to which these cards are put, and confine ourselves to their appearance – the composition and design of the pack.

In any of the popular accounts that have become so common, the Tarot pack is likely to be described as follows. It has four suits, consisting not of those with which we are familiar, but of Swords, Batons, Cups and Coins. In each suit there are ten numeral cards, from Ace to 10, and four court cards, instead of only three: King, Queen, Knight and Jack. Besides the 56 suit cards, there are twenty-two additional cards, making a pack of 78 cards in all: one unnumbered card, the Fool, and twenty-one picture cards, numbered (usually with Roman numerals) from I to XXI. In the early chapters of this book, the twenty-one numbered picture cards will be referred to as *triumphs*, for a reason that will be explained later. The subjects most usually depicted on the triumphs are as follows: I – the *Bagatto* (Mountebank); II – the Popess; III – the Empress; IV – the Emperor; V – the Pope; VI – Love (or the Lovers); VII – the Chariot; VIII – Justice; IX – the Hermit; X – the Wheel of Fortune; XI – Fortitude; XII – the Hanged Man; XIII – Death; XIV – Temperance; XV – the Devil; XVI – the Tower; XVII – the Star; XVIII – the Moon; XIX – the Sun; XX – Judgment; and XXI – the World. If the description follows the occultist tradition, then Batons will probably be called Wands, Coins will be called Pentacles, the Bagatto will be called the Magician, the Popess the High Priestess, the Pope the High Priest or the Hierophant, the triumphs as a whole, together with the Fool, the Major Arcana and the suit cards the Minor Arcana; but, although these names are appropriate to some modern packs, they are historically inaccurate. Nomenclature apart, the description just given is a perfectly correct account of the composition of the most characteristic form of the Tarot pack; as we shall see, it has had, and still has, other forms.

When we come to ask how and for what purpose this picturesque form of pack came into being, we need to isolate those features of the Tarot pack which are peculiar to it and differentiate it from the regular playing-card pack. To anyone familiar only with the Anglo-American pack, the answer to this question seems obvious: the Tarot pack differs in having different suit-signs; in having a Knight in each suit, in addition to the ordinary three court cards; and in containing the twenty-one triumphs. To such a person, the presence of the Fool, on the other hand, would be unlikely to appear a distinguishing characteristic: it seems obviously to be the equivalent of the Joker. It needs, however, only a little knowledge of the playing cards still in normal use in Italy and Spain to see that most of these answers are wrong.

Someone who has never played cards on the Continent of Europe may well suppose – if he asks himself the question at all – that the ordinary playing-card pack is, and perhaps always has been, everywhere the same. And it is indeed true that cards of the Anglo-American pattern – often now known, outside Britain and the United States, as the International pattern – are used in every country of the world at the present day. It will be obvious that the designs of the court cards in the Anglo-American pack are stereotyped, and vary from pack to pack or from maker to maker only within very narrow limits: they form what is known as a *standard pattern*. But anyone who has played cards almost anywhere in Europe outside Britain and Ireland is likely to be aware that this is far from being the only standard pattern of playing-card design. The Anglo-American pattern, originally borrowed by English cardmakers from one used at Rouen, and inherited by those of the United States, is only one among many, though the most widespread: there is a multitude of other, quite different, standard patterns, some now obsolete, but many still very much in use; some national, some regional, and others used in various areas and competing with other standard patterns; some well recognised and bearing accepted names, others identified only by historians of playing cards.

When a card game migrates from one country or region to another, it very often, though by no means always, takes with it the form of pack used for playing it in its native land. In this way, a standard pattern originally peculiar to one locality comes to be diffused over a wide area, and, often, to be associated with a particular game. It is, indeed, the spread, during the present century, of the games of Rummy, Poker and Contract Bridge to almost every country of the world that has caused the Anglo-American pattern to invade countries that still retain their own national or regional patterns for other games. For this reason, much can be learned about the history of card games by studying the history of the various standard patterns.

There are, however, other, more radical, differences between playing-card packs, including ones still in general use, than those variations in design that constitute the distinctions between the standard patterns; in particular, differences in the suit-signs employed. The cards used in, say, Belgium differ from those used in Britain only in respect of the standard pattern to which they conform: but some of those still widely used in Germany, Italy, Spain, Latin American countries and several others differ in this more fundamental respect, that they do not even bear the same suit-signs. The suit-signs with which we are familiar, and which are known in every country of the world – Spades, Clubs, Hearts and Diamonds – originated in France, and are therefore conveniently described as constituting the *French* suit-system. There are, however, three other, quite different, suit-systems still in regular use, the German, Swiss and Latin systems, all of which, as we shall see, are older than the French one. The *German* suit-system consists of Leaves, Acorns, Hearts and Bells (the Bells being small spherical ones). This system originated in Germany, and is now used, in a wide variety of distinct standard patterns, not only in Germany itself, but in Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the Italian Tyrol, Slovenia and occasionally Poland. The names of the suits in German, in the singular, as they are usually used, are, in the same order as above: *Laub*, or, more usually, *Grün* (green); *Eichel*; *Herz*, or, more usually, *Rot* (red); and *Schelle*. The *Swiss* suit-system is rather similar, consisting of Roses, Acorns, Shields and Bells. Not only did it originate in Switzerland, but it has never spread beyond that country; there has only ever been one standard pattern for it, and it is used primarily in the German-speaking cantons. The Swiss-German names of the suits, in the above order, are: *Rosen, Eicheln, Schilten* and *Schellen*.

The suits of the *Latin* system are those which we have already seen as being used in the Tarot pack – Swords, Batons, Cups and Coins: they are very far from being peculiar to the Tarot pack, being used equally for regular packs of playing cards not containing the triumphs which are the special feature of the Tarot pack, and having long been so used. The names of the suits in Italian, in the above order, are: *Spade, Bastoni, Coppe* and *Denari*; in Spanish they are: *Espadas, Bastos, Copas* and *Oros* (gold). Although I have spoken of 'the Latin suit-system', it should really be regarded as a family of suit-systems, having three variants sufficiently distinct each to rank as a separate suit-system in its own right. For convenience, I shall refer to these as the *Italian*, the *Spanish* and the *Portuguese* systems. This time, however, there is not meant to be any suggestion that the names indicate the country where each system originated, and, where necessary, I shall enclose the names in inverted commas as a reminder that no such suggestion is intended: at least in the case of the Spanish and Portuguese systems, the suggestion would, as we shall see, be definitely wrong. Nor would it be correct to think of these suit-systems as being, at any stage in history, confined to the country whose name we have assigned to it: the terms 'Italian', 'Spanish' and 'Portuguese', in this connection, are mere convenient labels, indicating no more than that the suit-system in question is, or was at one time, particularly associated with the country concerned.

The three suit-systems belonging to the Latin family share the same suit-signs, but are differentiated from one another primarily by the highly divergent shapes of the Swords and Batons, and the very different ways in which these two suit-signs are placed on the numeral cards. The Spanish Swords are straight, and the Spanish Batons are knotty cudgels, sometimes with protuberances representing shoots: both are placed on the cards (save for the 3 of Batons) in the manner familiar to us, namely each one separate from the others. The Italian Swords are crescent-shaped, and the Italian Batons are polished staffs: each Sword and each Baton extends from top to bottom of the card, and they are arranged on the cards so as to intersect, forming, in the case of the straight Batons, a trellis pattern (on the odd-numbered cards of the Swords suit, one sword is usually straight, and often two are straight on the 10 of Swords). The Portuguese system is intermediate between the other two: the Swords are straight, as in the Spanish system, but intersect, as in the Italian one; the Batons also intersect, and are usually much more regular in form than the Spanish ones, though not as smooth and straight as the Italian.

It is the Italian form of the Latin suit-system that is used in the characteristic type of Tarot pack with a description of which this chapter opened; the use of Spanish suit-signs in Tarot packs is virtually unknown. The use of the Italian variant in regular playing-card packs is now largely confined to the North-East of Italy, notably Trieste, Venice, Treviso and Trent, but also in certain parts of Lombardy, namely Brescia and Bergamo, and, for the game of Primiera, in Bologna; in these areas it is found in several different, though fairly closely related, standard patterns. It is not now in use, except for Tarot packs, anywhere outside Italy. Well into this century, however, a special form of Italian-suited pack survived in Central Europe, used only for the game known originally as Trappola. This game originated in Venice, but died out in its native land: in travelling North, it took with it a form of pack which, over the centuries, remained remarkably faithful in design to its Italian prototype. The last Trappola pack to be manufactured was made in Prague in 1944.

The Spanish-suited pack remains in predominant use throughout Spain and in the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America; it is also used, and manufactured, in Morocco. In France, it is used in the Catalan region of Roussillon, adjacent to Spain, and, with a very distinctive standard pattern, for the game of Aluette, popular in Brittany and in Bordeaux. Furthermore, it is in wider use in Italy than the Italian-suited pack itself: one standard pattern is used in Sicily, another, called after Naples, throughout the southern half of the peninsula, and two others in central Italy, from Rome as far north as Piacenza.

The Portuguese suit-system is now all but extinct: it survives only in a very special form of the Tarot pack peculiar to Sicily. It was, for long, the national suit-system of Portugal, but was also known in Florence, Rome, Sicily and Malta. In Europe, it has been the least successful of all the six different suit-systems here described (counting the three members of the Latin family as distinct systems): but it compensated for this by a prodigious success in Asia, where it travelled with the Portuguese colonialists and traders, as well as, of course, being used in Brazil. In India, in Indonesia and, above all, in Japan, the Portuguese playing-card pack was copied and adapted in style to indigenous artistic forms; indeed, in Japan, the entire practice of playing cards derives originally from the Portuguese example. There are still manufactured in Japan a number of types of playing-card pack which are demonstrably descendants of the Portuguese-suited pack, although they have diverged very far from their prototype and are known only to a minority of Japanese.

The use of suits unfamiliar to British and American card-players is, thus, in no way a peculiarity of the Tarot pack: it is simply that that pack, in the form described above, employs the Italian suit-system rather than the French one long ago adopted by the English cardmakers. That it should do so is not in the least surprising, since it was in Italy that the Tarot pack was invented, and at a time when no other suit-system was known there.

The supposition that the presence of the Knight is distinctive to the Tarot pack turns out to be equally mistaken. Because of the awkwardness of having two court cards whose names in English begin with a K (or three if one says 'Knave' rather than 'Jack'), we shall henceforward call the Knight the 'Cavalier': no association with the supporters of Charles I in the Civil War is intended – he is simply a Knight as in chess. This choice of name is justified by the fact that in French the name of this card is *Cavalier*, and in Italian and Spanish simply *Cavallo* and *Caballo* respectively (both meaning 'horse'), although in German it is *Reiter* or *Kavall*. Now, allied to the distinctions between the suit-systems are various other differences in the forms of the cards or in the composition of the pack, and, in particular, differences in the make-up of the court. In all suit-systems, the highest court card of each suit is the King (*Roi* in French, *König* in German, *Re* in Italian and *Rey* in Spanish); indeed, this is also true of various other forms of playing-card pack found outside Europe. But even here there is a distinction. In the French and Spanish suit-systems, the King is always shown standing. In the Italian, German and Swiss suit-systems, on the contrary, he is virtually always shown seated; the exception is the German-suited Hungarian pattern, used at the present day in Austria and Czechoslovakia as well as in Hungary, in which the King is mounted, as he was also, exceptionally, on some early German-suited cards. The Portuguese-suited pack originally agreed with the Italian-suited one in having seated Kings; only in some late examples did the Kings, under Spanish influence, come to be depicted standing. With modern double-headed cards it is, admittedly, often impossible to tell whether the King is standing or seated, but most standard double-headed patterns can be traced back to single-figure ones that are either otherwise identical or at least closely similar, so that, in almost all cases, we can say what was the original posture of the King.

A court consisting of King, Queen, and Jack (in French, *Roi*, *Dame* and *Valet*) is found only in the French-suited pack. In the German and Swiss suit-systems, all three court figures are male: the lower two, originally called *Obermann* and *Untermann*, have long been known simply as *Ober* and *Unter* (*Under* in Switzerland). They are almost always shown standing, although, in the Württemberg pattern, the Obers are mounted, and they are, of course, further distinguished from the King by the fact that he is crowned; very often there is a further aid to identification in that the King bears two suit-signs (four altogether in a double-headed pack). They are distinguished from one another, by a kind of visual pun, by the position of the suit-sign. In the older, single-figure, packs, the suit-sign of the Ober was at the top of the card, and that of the Unter at the bottom: now that double-headed cards are usual, the suit-sign of the Unter is at the bottom of the half-card, that is, just above the middle of the whole card. It should be borne in mind that the use of indices to show the rank of the cards did not become the usual practice until the late nineteenth century; even to this day some standard patterns still omit them. When there are no indices, it is essential that there should be some readily perceived conventional feature to make the rank of a court figure instantly recognisable. In German-suited packs, the primary mark of distinction between the Ober and the Unter is the position of the suit-sign.

In the Italian and Spanish suit-systems, the three court figures of the regular pack are again all male, but are differentiated in another way: the second court is a mounted Cavalier or Knight, the third one a Jack (in Italian *Fante*, in Spanish *Sota*), shown standing. In the Portuguese suit-system, the second court card was again a Cavalier, but the third one was female, shown standing, and will here be called a Maid. The name of this card in both Spanish and Portuguese is again *Sota*, which is in fact a feminine word; in Italian, it is called variously *Donna*, *Fantina* or *Fantiglia*.

The Cavalier has, thus, every right to be present in the Italian-suited Tarot pack; his presence is nothing special to the Tarot pack, since he is found in every Italian-suited pack. It is not he who is the intruder, but the Queen. The inclusion of four court cards, instead of only three, in each suit, is genuinely a special feature of the Tarot pack. In the fifteenth century, there were, it is true, a number of regular German-suited packs made with four court cards to each suit, usually with the Queen added to the three male figures, and it is possible that this sometimes happened in Italy also, though no such packs have survived: but that experiment was abandoned, and, from the sixteenth century onwards, regular playing-card packs have always had three court cards per suit, while Tarot packs have had four. In the very earliest Tarot pack to have survived, there were as many as six court cards in each of the four suits; but, with that one exception, so far as we know, every Tarot pack, of whatever form, has not only had just four court cards, but precisely the four that we have listed – King, Queen, Cavalier and Jack – save that the Jack is sometimes replaced by a Maid.

What distinguishes the Tarot pack from every other kind of playing-card pack is the presence of the twenty-one triumphs: a sequence of picture cards not identified by a suit-sign, like the ordinary suits, and not divided, like them, into numeral cards and court cards. Since, even in present-day Europe, there is such a variety of types of pack, we need a word to pick out that broad category of those which, unlike the Tarot pack, are entirely composed of cards belonging to suits properly so called. I have hitherto been using the word 'regular' for just this purpose, for which we may now explicitly appropriate it. Apart from the Tarot pack, those so far mentioned all have in common that they are divided into four suits. Almost from the earliest times when playing cards were known in Europe, however, down to our own times, repeated experiments have been made with the introduction of a fifth or even a sixth suit; although none of these experiments has ever won much favour with the card-playing public, it would be a mistake to make the division into just four suits a defining characteristic of regular packs. The presence of less than ten numeral cards in each suit is exceedingly common; the presence of more than ten is very exceptional, but not quite unknown. It would therefore be misleading to make the application of the term 'regular' depend on the exact number either of numeral cards or of court cards. What will be meant by a regular pack is any that is exhaustively divided into suits, each suit being distinguished by a suit-sign and divided into numeral cards, the rank of which is indicated by how often the suit-sign is repeated, and court cards showing human figures.

In the wide sense of the term 'playing card', there exist playing-card packs with a completely different structure, for instance a Lexicon pack. It would be a mistake to think of such things as existing only in modern times: from the fifteenth century onwards, people have been devising special packs of cards to play games of their own invention. Almost all of these have, indeed, been ephemeral. The one exception is the *Cuccú* pack, invented in Italy in the seventeenth century for a simple and amusing game, and still being produced; packs derived from it were once popular in Germany and are still popular in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Intermediate between these and regular packs are what may be called 'augmented' packs, ones consisting of a regular pack to which a number of cards not belonging to any of the ordinary suits have been added. To this general category the Tarot pack evidently belongs. A modern example is the Taotl pack, specially devised by its manufacturers for a complicated but excellent game; but historically all augmented packs known in Europe have been Tarot packs of one or another type. To ask why the Tarot pack was invented is, therefore, essentially to ask why anyone found it necessary to combine the regular pack with a sequence of a quite different kind.

Strictly speaking, our definition would require us to categorise any pack containing one or more Jokers as an augmented rather than a regular pack; this would obviously be misleading, and so we shall allow a pack to count as regular if, besides suit cards, it contains any number of Jokers, it being understood that, even though there may be more than one Joker, they are not in principle differentiated from one another. (For one game, Zwicker, played in Schleswig-Holstein, as many as six Jokers are used to one pack.) As previously remarked, no one unaware of the actual facts of the matter can resist identifying the Fool of the Tarot pack with the Joker of the regular pack, and it is often confidently asserted, on purely a priori grounds, that the Joker derives from the Tarot Fool. In fact, there is not a trace of connection between them. If there were, we should expect to find some form of Fool or Joker in regular Italian-suited packs, whereas it is only in French-suited packs, and, at that, in ones with a full complement of 52 cards, that the Joker is ever included. Long before the Joker was introduced into the regular pack, the practice was quite common, in a variety of games, of designating a particular suit card as wild: but the actual idea of introducing a special card for this purpose did not occur to anyone until the second half of the nineteenth century, in the United States, where the Joker first used in Euchre as the permanent highest trump was taken over for use in both Poker and Rummy as a wild card; and it was from there that it spread to Europe, together with those games. Since the Joker was invented at a time and place at which the Tarot pack was virtually unknown, we have to regard the resemblance between the Joker and the Fool of the Tarot pack as due to no more than pure coincidence.

To complete our brief survey of the different European suit-systems, we must glance briefly at the principal differences between them relating to the numeral cards. The full French-suited regular pack has, of course, 52 cards, as does the Italian-suited one. The full Spanish-suited pack, on the other hand, has only 48 cards, since it lacks the 10s. The same is true of almost all Portuguese-suited regular packs. Most of the latter, including all those used in Portugal itself, also had an outstanding peculiarity of design: dragons are depicted on all the Aces. This last feature was copied on all the playing cards derived from the Portuguese ones which were produced in India, Indonesia and Japan. While the 10s are missing in the Spanish and Portuguese suit-systems, German- and Swiss-suited packs make what is to us a much more surprising omission, namely of the Aces. This is no longer quite obvious from a glance at a German- or Swiss-suited pack, since there are cards which not only look much like Aces but are actually referred to as such, and, in Germany, where indices are used, bear the letter A for *As* (Ace). Historically, however, these cards are not Aces, but Deuces, and bear, not one, but two suit-signs. Formerly, German card-players were much more conscious of the historical origin of this card, and referred to it as the *Daus* (Deuce): indeed, the German-suited pack was frequently distinguished from the French-suited pack by calling the former *Dauskarte* and the latter *Askarte*. Now, however, the Deuce of the German- and Swiss-suited packs has been so thoroughly assimilated to the Ace of other packs that it has been all but forgotten that it had a different ancestry. The omission of the Aces reduces the full German- and Swiss-suited packs also to 48 cards; but full German-suited packs are no longer produced, having long been entirely superseded by shortened ones, while the full Swiss-suited pack maintains only the most tenuous existence. The Swiss-suited pack has one peculiarity of design which ought to be noted: the 10s do not, as in other packs, display ten suit-signs, but, instead, show a banner bearing a single suit-sign; for this reason, they are often referred to, not as 10s, but as Banners.

In Britain, several games are known, such as Bezique, in which a number of numeral cards are omitted from each suit; but they have never been so popular as to provide a great deal of incentive for the actual manufacture and sale of appropriately shortened packs. In most other European countries, however, the reverse holds good. Most of the celebrated national card games – Piquet in France, Skat in Germany, Klaverjassen in the Netherlands, Tresillo in Spain, Jass in Switzerland, Tressette in Italy – require a shortened pack. As a result, far more shortened packs are bought than ones with a full complement of cards. There is a great variety of such shortened packs: here only the principal ones will be noted. In France, a shortened pack has always 32 cards, as used for Bezique; it is often known in England as a Piquet pack, and is formed by omission of the numeral cards from 2 to 6. The shortened Swiss-suited pack consists of 36 cards, being formed by omission of the numeral cards from 3 to 5 from the full 48-card pack which it has now largely ousted. The full 48-card German-suited pack disappeared long ago; the principal shortened forms are a 36-card one, identical in composition with the Swiss-suited pack, and a 32-card one, which lacks also the 6s. French-suited packs are also common in Germany in both a 32-card form, as in France, and a 36-card form, retaining the 6s. The Spanish-suited pack in both Spain and France is still found in both the full 48-card form and a shortened 40-card form, the latter formed by omission of the 8s and 9s. In Italy, however, the Spanish-suited pack exists only in the shortened form with 40 cards. Full 52-card versions of the Italian-suited pack are still produced in small numbers: since, however, almost all modern Italian card games demand only 40 cards, both Italian- and French-suited packs are mostly sold with only 40 cards, omitting the 8s and 9s and 10s. The Trappola pack, the sole type of Italian-suited regular pack used, at least after the sixteenth century, by non-Italian-speaking players, and then only for a particular game, was also a shortened pack, of 36 cards, whose composition was unique: it retained the 2s as well as the Aces, and omitted the numeral cards from 3 to 6. How these various differences in composition arose will be described in the next chapter.

The form of Tarot pack described at the outset of this chapter is not, as there remarked, its only form. It occurs in both Portuguese-suited and, particularly, French-suited versions; there are also shortened forms of the Tarot pack, and, for many centuries, there existed one expanded form of it. All these will be described in due course. In the meantime, if we are to understand how and why the Tarot pack came to be invented, we must look a little at the historical evolution of European playing cards.

CHAPTER 2

The Beginnings in Europe

The history of chess has been intensively investigated, and is not, save in matters of detail, in dispute. The game was invented in India in or before the sixth century A.D, was introduced into Persia in the sixth century and into the Byzantine Empire before the ninth, spread after the Muslim conquest of Persia throughout the Islamic world, and from there was brought to Western Europe in the ninth or tenth century. By contrast, the origin and diffusion of playing cards remain very much subject to doubt, although much has been discovered and is currently being discovered.

The earliest European references to playing cards and card games have been assiduously collected and intensively scrutinised. When the process of collection began, the first impression was that they clustered thickly around the turn of the fourteenth century, but stretched back before that, becoming sparser and sparser, until the beginning of the thirteenth. Under scrutiny, however, many of these references were rejected as misreadings or later interpolations, and the final picture that emerged was quite different. With one disputed and one unconfirmed exception, no authentic reference to playing cards is known from any European source before the year 1377. In that year, there are four: one from Florence, one from Paris, one from Basle and one from Siena. From then on, they come in thick and fast: not from all over Europe, but from a large part of it – from Italy and Sicily, from Switzerland and southern Germany, from the Low Countries, from Paris, Marseilles and Barcelona; between 1377 and 1400, an average of about three references every two years. From several localities, there is more than one reference in this period; here is a list of places from which we know of fourteenth-century references to playing cards, together with the dates of the *earliest* known reference: Florence (1377); Paris (1377); Basle (1377); Siena (1377); Regensburg (1378); Viterbo (1379); Brabant (1379); St Gallen (1379); Berne (between 1367 and 1398, perhaps in 1379); Constance (1379); Barcelona (1380); Nuremberg (1380); Perpignan (1380); Marseilles (1381); Lille (1382); Valencia (1384); Sicily (between 1377 and 1391); Zurich (1389); Venice (1390); the County of Holland (1390); Augsburg (1391); Frankfurt-am-Main (1392); Ulm (1397); Leyden (1397).[1]

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[1] For most of these references, see W.L. Schreiber, *Die ältesten Spielkarten*, Strasbourg, 1936, G. Piccard and H. Rosenfeld, 'Neue Beiträge zum Alter der Spielkarten', *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, vol. 3, 1961, pp. 555-66, and H. Rosenfeld, 'Zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte und Morphogenese von Kartenspiel und Tarock', *Archiv für Kulturgeschicte*, vol. 52, 1970, pp. 65-94, especially pp. 75-6. For those from Perpignan and Valencia, see José María Madurell Marimón, *Notas Documentales de Naiperos Barceloneses*, in *Documentos y Estudios*, vol. IV, Instituto Municipal de Historia, Barcelona, 1961, pp. 54-117; see pp. 62 and 64. For that from Venice, see B. Cecchetti, 'Giocolieri e giuochi antichi in Venezia', *Archivo Veneto*, vol. XXXVIII, 1889, fasc. 76, p. 426. That from Sicily has not been published: it comes from an edict issued under Maria I, who reigned as sole monarch from 1377 to 1391; the text of the edict is contained in a manuscript volume of laws of the town of Lentini, written about 1410-20, presently in the possession of Mrs Virginia Bugliardo, of New York, who very kindly provided me with a photocopy of the relevant pages. Pavle Bidev, *Die spanische Herkunft der Spielkarte*, ed. Egbert Meissenburg, Winsen-Luhe, 1973, p. 10, cites a mention of *naipes* in Saragossa in 1378 (not a prohibition). He gives Joseph Brunet y Bellet, *Lo joch de naibs, naips ó cartas*,

Most of these early references tell us no more than that card playing occurred in the given area at the time in question: some record the purchase of a pack or the playing of a game, and many are city ordinances banning the playing of various games, particularly dice and cards. One of the earliest, however, the celebrated treatise *Tractatus de moribus et disciplina humanae conversationis*, written in Basle in 1377 by a Dominican friar by the name of John (usually known, probably wrongly, as John of Rheinfelden), gives an actual description of the pack as known to its author, though not of any of the games played with it. From this we learn that the structure of the pack was essentially what it is now. There were four suits, each with its own suit-sign; each suit consisted of 13 cards, divided into ten numeral cards and three court cards. The numeral cards were distinguished, just as now, by the number of repetitions of the suit-sign. The court cards consisted of a seated King and a higher and lower 'Marshal', each holding his suit-sign in his hand. (This last detail tallies with the practice in many of the earliest surviving packs, and in some of the later ones). The two Marshals were distinguished by the fact that the higher one held his suit-sign aloft, while the lower one held it hanging down from his hand: these were, evidently, then, the Swiss or German Ober and Unter. Brother John unfortunately does not indicate what suit-signs were used. These cards would, of course, have been single-headed: double-headed ones did not come in until the eighteenth century, and were adopted, for various standard patterns, only very slowly (for the Anglo-American one, only after 1850); indeed, some standard patterns use single-headed cards to this day. They would also have lacked indices: these appeared haphazardly as early as the fifteenth century, but were never placed in the corners, and were seldom used systematically, until the modern practice was introduced by American card manufacturers in the 1870s; it, too, has yet to spread to all standard patterns. But, in essentials, save for the use of Ober and Unter instead of Queen and Jack, and, we can be sure, save also for the suit-signs, the pack described by John of Rheinfelden in the earliest year from which we have any mention of playing cards in Europe was exactly the same as our modern English pack.[2]

The evidence thus strongly suggests that there was no long period of evolution at the end of which the playing-card pack as we know it emerged, but, on the contrary, that, a matter of at most a very few years before 1377, the pack was either invented or introduced from elsewhere, in a fully developed form, and immediately spread over a wide area of Europe. This impression is reinforced by the fact that two of the very early sources – John of Rheinfelden writing in 1377 and the Chronicles of Viterbo referring to the year 1379 – explicitly state that playing cards had been introduced into their areas in the very year in question, while the Valencia edict of 1384 refers to them as 'a new game', and the earliest reference of all, the Florentine edict of 1377, speaks of them as 'newly introduced in these parts'.[3] There are also well-known arguments from silence. Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (1366) discusses a number of games but says nothing about playing cards; a Paris ordinance of 1369 forbids numerous games, but does not mention card games, although one of 1377 was to forbid cards to be played on work days; similarly, a St Gallen ordinance of 1364 forbade dice games, and allowed board games, but left cards unmentioned, although an ordinance of 1379 prohibited them as well.

This is not to say that no problems arise. Dr Peter Kopp had claimed the discovery of a yet earlier reference to card playing, from an ordinance of the city of Berne in 1367.[4] (Mr Lex Rijnen has reported an earlier one still, from the neighbourhood of Amsterdam in about 1365, but

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Barcelona, 1886, as his authority for all the references cited by him and not by Rosenfeld, but I cannot find a mention of the Saragossa reference in that book. Bidev's work demands a modification of the statement of the opening paragraph that the Indian origin of chess is not in dispute, since he favours a Chinese origin, basing this claim on the evidence presented in Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol 4, part I, Cambridge, 1962, pp. 314-31. This evidence was in part discussed, and rejected as irrelevant to the origin of chess, by H.J.R. Murray in his *History of Chess*, Oxford, 1913, p. 122.

[2] See E.A. Bond, 'The history of playing-cards', *Athenaeum*, no. 2621, 19 Jan. 1878, p. 87, col. 3 – p. 88, col. 2.

[3] Mr George Beal, in *Discovering Playing-Cards and Tarots*, Aylesbury, 1972, p. 4, states that a manuscript of 1384 from Nuremberg speaks of the 'widespread adoption of the new game throughout Europe', but I have been unable to find any confirmation of this.

[4] 'Die frühesten Spielkarten in der Schweiz', *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 30, 1973, pp. 130-45.

this as yet remains unconfirmed.)[5] A shift of ten years in the chronology is in itself of minor importance; but if a decade elapsed between the first known reference and the second, then perhaps playing cards had been in use in some localities for ten or even twenty years before the first reference occurred, and the many references from 1377 onwards are evidence only of their wider diffusion rather than of their invention or introduction.

Dr Hellmut Rosenfeld has controverted Dr Kopp's claim:[6] we have only a copy of the 1367 ordinance from a compilation made in 1398, and Dr Rosenfeld gives detailed grounds for thinking the mention of card playing to be an insertion at a later date. On this he seems to have the better of the argument; but there is a point about the *Tractatus de moribus* itself which is more uncertain. After giving the description cited above of the playing-card pack in what it calls its 'common form, and that in which it first reached us', the text goes on to list a number of variants: one in which all the Kings are replaced by Queens; one in which two of the suits have Kings and the other two Queens; one with five suits; another with six; and, finally, one with four suits, but with five court cards in each suit (King, Queen, the two Marshals and a Maid), making 60 cards in all. Now we have no cards surviving from the fourteenth century, but we do have a considerable number from the fifteenth century, and among them are German packs showing variations of this kind, including ones with five suits, one in which the court figures are all male in two of the suits and all female in the other two, ones with female Unters and ones with four court cards per suit; so, although we do not have representatives of all the variants mentioned in the *Tractatus*, it is very plausible that there should have been such variants. What is not credible, however, is that such a range of variations on the original form should have developed within a year or two of the introduction or invention of the playing-card pack.

For this, two rival explanations have been offered. Dr Kopp believes that, by the time John of Rheinfelden became acquainted with them, playing cards had already been known for long enough (presumably about two decades or more) for variants to have been invented. Against this it must be said that it would be strange for Brother John to have written, 'the form in which they first reached us', if, in the course of that same year, he had encountered five other forms. It would also be puzzling that, from a period of twenty years or so, only one or two references to playing cards should have come down to us, given that they cluster so thickly thereafter. Dr Rosenfeld's explanation is that the account of the variant forms is an addition by a later copyist. This is, perhaps, more plausible, but has its own difficulties. We do not have the original manuscript of the *Tractatus* (which, as Dr Kopp has observed, may have been destroyed in the Franco-Prussian War); we have one MS. of 1429 and three, made by different copyists, all from 1472, all four of which agree very closely, as Dr Kopp has shown. Dr Rosenfeld's suggestion is therefore that the interpolation was due to the 1429 copyist, whom the later ones followed. The hypothesis cannot, however, be that we can get back to Brother John's original text simply by excising the passage dealing with the variant forms, together with the phrase 'the common form, and that in which it first reached us' previously quoted. The *Tractatus*, as we now have it, goes on to express, and give grounds for, a preference for the 60-card form, and, later, to include a whole short section on the excellence of the number 60, as well as another on the Queen (the treatise as a whole being an essay in moralising based on the playing-card pack). Hence, if interpolations occurred, they were carried out on an extensive scale. The problem has thus not yet been completely resolved. My personal inclination is to think that Dr Rosenfeld has more of the truth of the matter. But, even if Dr Kopp is right, the consequences are comparatively minor: the picture is altered, significantly perhaps, but not very substantially.

The other documentary sources yield no clues to what fourteenth-century playing cards were like, and none have actually survived from that period; so, to guess at the character of these earliest European cards, we have to extrapolate from the surprisingly large number that have come down to us from the fifteenth century – all but a few, indeed, from the second half. A moment's reflection will show how remarkable it is that we have any playing cards at all from very early times. What does anyone do with a pack of cards that have become too dirty, too creased or too torn to be used any longer for play? Obviously he throws them away; and since they are made of so perishable a material, their chances of survival for several centuries are very slim indeed. A few early cards have been found in wells and similar places where they have lain undisturbed; but by far the greater number of cards that have come down to us from early times owe their survival to the frequent practice of using them to line the bindings of books, where they have been found when the book has been rebound; presumably our libraries still conceal others that remain to be discovered. We are therefore very lucky to have as many cards from the fifteenth century as we have; it is not surprising that these are not evenly distributed, either geographically or in respect of date of origin. We have a very considerable number of cards from the northern half of Italy, from Switzerland and from southern Germany; we have quite a number from France, but not before 1460; we have a very few from Aragon, but not before the very end of the century; but we have none at all from the Low Countries or from the southern half of Italy, nor from countries such as England and Castile which do not appear to have been included in the area where playing cards were first known in Europe and probably did not begin to use them until the fifteenth century.

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[5] 'Makers of playing-cards in the Netherlands', *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. IV, no. 2, 1975, pp. 34-7.

[6] In 'Zu den frühesten Spielkarten in der Schweiz: eine Entgegnung', *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 32, 1975, pp. 179-80, and, in a more general context, in 'Zur Datierbarkeit früher Spielkarten in Europe und im nahen Orient', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, 1975, pp. 353-71.

The foregoing observations about the perishability of playing cards apply primarily to those of the cheap popular variety. From the fifteenth century right down to the early nineteenth, the principal mode of manufacture of popular playing cards was by means of wood blocks. On such a block would be engraved the designs for a number of cards; the blocks were inked, and the outline designs then printed on a sheet. The colouring would then be done by stencil, as many stencils as there were colours to be used; finally, when the colours had all dried, the individual cards were cut out of the sheet, and complete packs made up. The greater number of popular cards that have survived from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are on uncut sheets, usually as yet uncoloured – presumably trial pulls or ones that appeared unsatisfactory or defective in some respect; being larger than individual cards and not subjected to the wear and tear of play, they had more chance of survival, though they are often torn or fragmentary. There were, however, more expensive cards made by other processes. The most luxurious were hand-painted ones, often the work of well-known artists, produced for the use of the aristocracy at high prices, or, of a slightly less de luxe type, with outline designs printed by wood block but then hand-coloured. Another type of luxury cards were copper-engraved ones, again often produced by celebrated engravers and treasured as works of art. Hand-painted and copper-engraved cards were, naturally, not as ephemeral as the cheap ones printed by wood block and coloured by stencil; they would be carefully preserved and handed down as an heirloom.

For this reason, the cards that have survived to us from early times contain a disproportionate number of those of these superior types; and this may distort our picture of the historical development. In the special case of the Tarot pack, its very early history is probably correctly regarded as the history of the hand-painted cards used by the nobility, since it appears to have been, at the outset, confined to aristocratic circles. But, in general, the history of playing cards is the history of those of the cheap popular variety; luxury packs are mere side branches, not part of the main stem. In all places and at all times, cheap popular cards always conform to the stereotyped designs that constitute standard patterns; although such standard patterns may be highly localised, and change gradually over the course of time, it is a universal law that playing-card designs, for a particular type of pack and in a particular region, very rapidly crystallise into such standardised forms, from which individual cardmakers can deviate only to the extent that the card players are unlikely to notice, and which, likewise, can change only so slowly that the players do not notice that they have changed. The reason for this is easy to understand. As already remarked, the regular use of indices on playing cards is relatively recent, and, indeed, not universal even now. For most of playing-card history, card players have expected to identify a given card by its overall appearance, not by a symbol in the corner or elsewhere. It is of obvious importance for play that each player is able to recognise each card immediately and without error. It does not matter, for this purpose, that a design may be highly conventionalised and therefore not easily identifiable by someone unfamiliar with that type of pack. What matters is that the players who are familiar with it can tell at a glance which card is which; and this is possible only if the cards vary very little from one pack to another, no matter which cardmaker produced them. Painters and engravers engaged in the production of a luxury item do not usually feel this constraint very heavily; rather, they feel, not merely at liberty, but actually called on, to invent new and original designs. But, for this reason, however beautiful their work, it has very little influence on playing-card history: the main stream of that history is concerned with the evolution and dissemination of the standard patterns used for cheap popular cards. It is therefore important not to pay undue attention to the hand-painted and copper-engraved packs which survive so much more frequently than the popular cards printed by wood block. It is evident from many of the early references, and particularly from the repeated civic ordinances against card playing, that card games became a popular pastime from the earliest appearance of playing cards in Europe.

The most obvious lacuna in John of Rheinfelden's account is his failure to specify the suit signs. The evidence of the fifteenth-century cards surviving to us allows us to form no more than a hypothesis about this, although a highly plausible one. All surviving fifteenth-century Italian cards employ the Latin suit-system, usually in its Italian form, but occasionally with variations, and this is confirmed by literary sources. The Aragonese cards also employ the Latin suit-system, essentially in its 'Portuguese' form. The French cards, none of which are earlier than 1460, show either the Latin suit-signs in their specifically 'Spanish' form, or, from about 1480, the French ones. In both Switzerland and Germany we find great variation in suit-signs. Recent discoveries of cards from several packs made in about 1520 in either Zurich or Basle have revealed that the Latin suit-system was also known in Switzerland.[7] One incomplete sheet, made in Basle in about 1531, shows suits of Purses and Keys, and several incomplete packs made in Basle and ranging in date from 1470 to about 1529 have suits of Feathers, Hats, Shields and Bells.[8] What was to become the Swiss suit-system of Acorns, Roses, Shields and Bells seems to have taken shape about 1450 or a little earlier, the earliest example being dated between 1433 and 1451 (though of this only cards of the Shields suit survive); it must have ousted its rivals by about 1535. The two earliest surviving German packs are hand-painted ones, the Stuttgart pack, made between 1427 and 1431, and the Ambraser hunting pack dated 1440-5, both with animal and bird suit-symbols. There are also several different copper-engraved packs with a bewildering variety of suit-signs, mostly animals, birds and flowers; this tradition lasted well into the sixteenth century, a celebrated example being the pack made by Virgil Solis of

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[7] See Vera Sack, 'Zwei frühe Volkskartenspiele mit italienischen Farben', *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, vol. XVI, 1976, pp. 1218-78; Hellmut Rosenfeld, 'Ulmer Kartendrucker um 1500 als Produzent zum Export nach Italien und Frankreich', ibid., vol. XVIII, 1977, pp. 526-42; and *Schweizer Spielkarten*, catalogue of the exhibition of Swiss playing cards at the Kunstgewerbe Museum, Zurich, 1978, no. 20, with notes by Peter Kopp. Dr Sack deals with some seventy-seven cards or card fragments discovered in bindings of books at the Zurich University Library; Rosenfeld discusses another set of sixteen, mostly fragmentary, cards, found in the binding of a work by Erasmus published in Basle in 1520, but does not refer to Dr Sack's article; the catalogue refers to both articles, and speaks of over a hundred cards, of which a selection was shown at the exhibition, and which presumably include those discussed by Dr Sack. To judge by the cards shown at the exhibition and the illustrations in the two articles, the cards come from several different packs, and corresponding cards are almost, but not quite, identical in design, indicating the use of different blocks for a highly stereotyped pattern. Dr Sack's dating of 1572 was obviously overtaken by events. Rosenfeld assigns the cards he discusses to Ulm, but it is plain that all these cards go together, and Kopp is surely right in agreeing with Dr Sack that they are Swiss. The Swords are straight but intersecting; the Batons also intersect, and are staffs with three bands at the top; the Cups have lids and handles. The denominations conform to the Swiss model: the 10s are Banners, the court cards are King, Ober and Unter, and there are no Aces. This makes Rosenfeld's suggestion, also entertained by Kopp, that these cards were intended for export to Italy, extremely unlikely; they were surely meant for local use. The cards described by Rosenfeld are in the Bavarian Staatsbibliothek in Munich.

[8] For the pack with Purses and Keys, see H. Rosenfeld, 'Die ältesten Spielkarten und ihre Farbzeichen', *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, vol. I, 1956-8, pp. 122-8, and the catalogue *Schweizer Spielkarten*, no. 16, with notes by P. Kopp. For the cards with Feathers and Hats, see P. Kopp, article cited in footnote 4, the catalogue *Spielkarten: ihre Kunst und Geschichte in Mitteleuropa* to the exhibition at the Albertina in Vienna, 1974, nos. 44-7, and *Schweizer Spielkarten*, nos. 17, G, 18a, 18b, 18c, 18d and 19, both with notes by Kopp. In these Feather and Hat packs, the 10s are pip cards, not Banners.

Nuremberg. As already observed, German cardmakers produced some packs with five suits, and, according to the *Tractatus de moribus*, also with six; and there is some evidence, to which Detlef Hoffmann has drawn attention, of a fashion in the early sixteenth century for a type of pack with a very large number of suits, going as high as sixteen.[9] Several packs made in Germany, both wood- and copper-engraved, employ the Latin suit-signs. Some of these can be explained as intended for export, but this is not true of all. It is not true, in particular, of a wood-engraved pack from south Germany, the Liechtenstein pack, which has, besides the Latin suits, a fifth suit of Shields; it is also untrue of the pack made by Hopfer of Nuremberg in 1536 or 1539.[10] The great majority of German popular wood-engraved cards, from 1460 on, display the standard German suit-signs of Leaves, Acorns, Hearts and Bells. But a suit of Birds was also in use, and is associated by Hoffmann with Alsace;[11] this lasted until the end of the sixteenth century, as did also the Roses suit, which Hoffmann takes as characteristic of the Upper Rhine region.[12] There is no evidence for the standard German suit-signs before 1460. The Dominican Meister Ingold, who in 1450 wrote a work in the Alsatian dialect called *Das Guldin Spil*, lists the four suits as Roses, Crowns, Pennies and Rings; a set of mutilated cards, perhaps made in Alsace in about 1480, shows suits of Shields, Crowns, Bells and Acorns, while a fragmentary sheet which has been thought to be as early as about 1450, the Maihinger pack, has suits of Lions, Bears and Dogs.[13]

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[9] A sixteen-suited pack is in the Lady Schreiber collection in the British Museum, and is illustrated in *Playing Cards … from the Collection of Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, vol. II, London, 1893, plates 79-80. Hoffmann connects this with a sheet at Nuremberg (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, catalogue no. Sp 7031), showing at least six suits, with two fragmentary sixteenth-century sheets from the Upper Rhine, showing suits of Carnations, Beans and Birds, at Frankfurt (Historisches Museum, catalogue number C 384-5), and with an illustration in Geiler of Kaisersberg's *Brösamlin*, showing an itinerant vendor of playing cards, in whose basket are to be seen cards of several non-standard suits; for the Frankfurt sheets, see D. Hoffmann, *Inventarkatalog der Spielkartensammlung des Historischen Museums,* Frankfurt am Main, 1972, no. 9. Thomas Murner of Strasbourg made two packs for didactic purposes, one, in 1509, for teaching logic and the other, in 1515, for teaching law: the first had sixteen, the second twelve, suits. The suit-signs in both packs include Bells, Acorns, Hearts, Shields and Crowns, but the other ones have usually been considered the products of Murner's imagination. Hoffmann has suggested that they may, on the contrary, reflect an authentic, though deviant, type of many-suited pack of playing cards properly so called in vogue at the time.

[10] For the Liechtenstein pack, which is called after a former owner, not after its place of origin, and is now in the Rothschild Collection in the Louvre, see D. Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte*, Leipzig, 1972, p. 25 and plate 24; W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., pp. 16-17 and plates II and III; the Albertina catalogue, no. 15; and Vera Sack, article cited in footnote 7. The date of the pack is in dispute: F. Koreny, in the Albertina catalogue, dates it to between 1440 and 1450, making it the earliest surviving set of German cards printed from wood blocks; Dr Sack places it after 1500, setting 1494 as the earliest possible date. There are two sheets, showing seated Kings and standing Obers and Unters of all five suits, the Unters of Coins and Batons being female, and the Ace of Shields. For the Hopfer pack, see Hoffmann, op. cit., plate 42b, and the Albertina catalogue, no. 36. Forty-seven cards survive and are in the Kunstbibliothek in West Berlin. The suit-signs of Swords and Batons are arranged in a very unusual manner, as spokes of a wheel, all intersecting at the same point; the Swords are straight. Hoffmann, p. 29, unreasonably calls this a Trappola pack. His illustration shows Jacks of Cups and Coins, and what is probably a Cavalier of Cups, but might just be a mounted King of that suit; unfortunately, I do not remember the details of the other cards. Koreny, in the Albertina catalogue, mentions unproblematic Aces of Batons and Coins, the latter bearing the date, but questions whether the cards showing, respectively, Flora and Lucretia running a sword through her breast represent Aces or 'Queens' of Cups and Swords.

[11] See D. Hoffmann, op. cit., p. 70, note to plate 39b, which illustrates a pack made in 1585 by Heinrich Hauk of Frankfurt with suits of Roses, Acorns, Birds and Bells, and the Albertina catalogue, no. 62, which relates to another pack dated 1588 with the same suit-signs and by the same maker. Examples of both are at Frankfurt (Historisches Museum), and of one in the Cincinnati Art Museum: see C.P. Hargrave, *History of Playing Cards*, New York, 1930, 1966, p. 113, and Hoffmann, *Inventarkatalog*, Frankfurt, 1972, nos. 12-21; compare also no. 57. A sheet of four numeral cards of the Birds suit is illustrated by W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., plate II, and a King of Birds in the Albertina catalogue, no. 18, p. 58.

[12] See Albertina catalogue, no. 62, where Hoffmann says that a suit of Roses is found in many packs of this period. A pack made by H.S. Beham of Nuremberg in about 1523, an example of which is in the Kupferstichkabinett in Dresden, has suits of Leaves, Acorns, Roses and Pomegranates; see Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte*, plate 42a, and Albertina catalogue, no. 31. Another pack, attributed by Koreny to Beham, is in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, and has suits of Acorns, Bells, Roses and Parrots; see F. Koreny, 'Ein unbekannte Kartenspiel von H.S. Beham', *Studies of European and Oriental Playing-Cards*, supplement to the *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. IV, no. 4, May 1976, part I, pp. 3-15. The pack is illustrated in Roger Tilley, *A History of Playing Cards*, London, 1973. Fragments from a pack which is a copy of this by another maker are in the Lady Schreiber Collection in the British Museum; see Koreny, op. cit., and the Albertina catalogue, no. 179. Note also the two packs by Heinrich Hauk mentioned in footnote 11. There is also the celebrated pack by Virgil Solis of Nuremberg, made about 1540-5, with suits of Lions, Apes, Parrots and Peacocks, in which, however, inscriptions on the Aces identify each suit with one of those of the conventional German suit-system, and a partial copy, perhaps by Heinrich Hauk, with suits of Lions, Apes, Parrots and Eagles (see Albertina catalogue, nos. 37 and 38).

Handpainted and copper-engraved cards are no sure guide, and we have very few popular cards from before 1460, so it is impossible to decide the matter with certainty. But in Italy the fifteenth-century hand-painted packs did not use non-standard suit-signs; if the national suit-system of Germany had already come into existence in the first half of the century, it would surely have appeared in at least some of the luxury packs. The one piece of literary evidence we have, which suggests that the German suit-system was not established by 1450, is reinforced rather than otherwise by the fact that, in an edition of Ingold's work printed at Augsburg in 1472, an illustration depicting a card game does show two of the standard German suits (Leaves and Hearts). The most reasonable conclusion is that of W.L. Schreiber, that it was not until about 1460 that the German suit-system was adopted;[14] during the thirty years before that, it seems that chaos prevailed in Germany in respect of suit-symbols. It was not until the end of the sixteenth century that the last traces of that chaos vanished.

What are we to make of all this? Dr Kopp has interpreted John of Rheinfelden's silence about suit-symbols as implying that the anarchy in regard to suit-signs prevalent in Germany up to about 1460 was the original condition everywhere during the very earliest period, the late fourteenth century: that there was, at the start, no generally accepted system of suit-signs, every cardmaker being free to choose his own. A different explanation of Brother John's apparent silence is thinkable, however. We have seen that, in all likelihood, the *Tractatus de moribus* was subjected to some rather far-reaching revision, probably by the copyist of 1429. If the original text had mentioned four specific suit-symbols, but, by the time it was brought up to date to take account of variant forms of pack, those symbols were no longer the only or the most usual ones, and no generally accepted alternative system had yet emerged, it is highly probable that the later editor would simply have suppressed the mention of particular symbols. Kopp's conjecture cannot be disproved; but it is intrinsically improbable, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, evidence from outside Europe makes it more unlikely still. Variation of this kind is normally something that develops only after an interval; in reproducing the equipment for a new game, makers would, if they behaved naturally, at first copy the prototype, and only later begin to introduce variants. But, now, if we once accept that, at the outset, there was some one suit-system universally employed, alternatives to which appeared, in some areas, only after playing cards had been known for a few decades, then there is really only one candidate for being that original suit-system: the Latin one. In Italy, Spain and Portugal, no other was known for several centuries. In France, the earliest surviving cards are all Latin-suited, and, so far as we know, the French suit-system did not come into existence until about 1480. Even in Switzerland and Germany, the Latin suit-system was certainly known. The Liechtenstein pack, if it is really of the mid-fifteenth century, may even have been fairly representative of contemporary popular packs; the search for a new suit-system may have been conducted in the first place chiefly through the medium of the luxury hand-painted and copper-engraved packs. The most natural assumption is that there was one original system of suit-signs, that which would have been known to John of Rheinfelden and was used when playing cards first appeared in Europe. If this assumption is sound, that system can only have been the Latin one.

On this hypothesis, therefore, it was the Latin suit-signs that, in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, were used wherever playing cards had spread, in Italy, Switzerland, southern Germany, the Low Countries, France, Aragon and Sicily. Moreover, we can make the hypothesis somewhat more precise. In Italy, what we have designated as the 'Italian' arrangement of the Swords and Batons is the most usual on fifteenth-century cards, but we find also two other principal variations: a 'Portuguese' type of arrangement of the Swords, namely as intersecting but straight, and another that did not last beyond the fifteenth century, in which the Swords are curved and extend for the whole length of the card, but are placed so as to be concave towards the nearest edge and so not to intersect. We should surely see these variations, not as having been intended to constitute distinct suit-systems, but, rather, as mere allowable deviations from the most usual type of design. The 'Spanish' form of arrangement, on the other hand, in which, on the higher numeral cards, the Swords and Batons do not extend for the whole length of the card, was unknown in fifteenth-century Italy.[15] The early Aragonese cards were described above as exemplifying the 'Portuguese' system: specifically, they have straight Swords, but they and the rather irregularly shaped Batons intersect; the court cards consist of a seated King, a Cavalier and a Maid. Though too few of these cards survive for any generalisation about them to be very firm, it seems likely that Italian and Aragonese playing cards were originally of the same general type, within which certain variations were considered allowable, and that, by the end of the century, custom in Aragon had hardened in favour of straight Swords and Maids instead of Jacks as the third court card of each suit.[16] This would explain the otherwise puzzling fact that, although the third court figure in the 'Spanish' suit-system is always male, the normal Spanish word for 'Jack', *Sota*, is feminine. I have spoken here of the earliest known playing cards from the Iberian peninsula as being Aragonese rather than as being Spanish, because the earliest surviving cards are from the neighbourhoods of Barcelona and Valencia, and we know nothing about early playing cards in Castile; while Catalonia is among the areas where playing cards were first known in fourteenth-century Europe, we have no ground for asserting that they were known in Castile until the mid-fifteenth century.[17]

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[13] See *Das Goldene Spiel von Mesiter Ingold*, ed. by Edward Schröder, being vol. III of *Elsässische Litteraturdenkmäler*, Strasbourg, 1882, p. 64. For the pack with a Crowns suit, see P. Kopp, 'Einige Streiflichter auf die Geschichte der Schweizer Spielkarten', *Studies of European and Oriental Playing-Cards*, supplement to the *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. IV, no. 4, May 1976, II/38-48, and the catalogue *Schweizer Spielkarten*, Zurich, 1978, no. 15. The cards, which have Banner 10s, are at Basle (Historisches Museum). For the Maihinger cards, see W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., Plate I, the Albertina catalogue, no. 14, and the catalogue of the Fournier Museum, Vitoria, to which the sheet now belongs, German section, no. 1.

[14] Op. cit., p. 125.

Thus, before the 'Italian' and 'Portuguese' suit-systems were differentiated, there appears to have been a general type of Latin pack, admitting three principal variants: one, which became the 'Italian' form, and was predominant in Italy in the fifteenth century, with curved and intersecting Swords; another, to become the 'Portuguese' form, with straight intersecting Swords; and a third, obsolete after the fifteenth century, with curved but non-intersecting

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[15] With the possible exception of a problematic hand-painted Tarot pack; see Chapter 4.

[16] One sheet of fifteen fifteenth-century Catalan cards is illustrated in an unsigned article 'El Joc de naibs a Catalunya' in the Catalan journal *Bibliofilia*, ed. R. Miquel y Planas, vol. II, Barcelona, 1915-20, columns 181-207; see plates 162a, 162b, 166a. The top row consists of the Maids of Swords and Cups and the Cavaliers of Cups, Batons and Swords; the middle row of the Aces of Cups, Coins and Batons and the Maids of Coins and Batons; the bottom row of the Ace of Swords and the 2s of all four suits. The bottom two rows are also illustrated in Agustí Duran-Sanpere, *Grabados Populares Españoles*, Barcelona, 1971, plate 127 (this work has been translated into several languages, including German): this illustration is reproduced in the Albertina catalogue, plate 30b. The sheet is now in the Museo Municipal de Arte de Cataluña, Barcelona. The Batons are lopped-off branches; the Swords are straight, and both Swords and Batons are crossed on the 2s; the Coins bear the arms of Aragon. They were discovered in the book cover of a Catalan manuscript volume of 1519, which puts an upper limit on their age. Joseph Puiggarí, in an article about them, 'Joch de Nayps Catalá', *L'Avens*, Barcelona, 1890, pp. 230-5, dates them to 1460-70; Duran-Sanpere assigns them to the early sixteenth century. A notable feature is the presence of naked children disporting themselves about the suit-symbols on all of the Aces and 2s; they are sawing up the Baton on the Ace of that suit. Another sheet with twelve cards is illustrated in the *Bibliofilia* article: this shows the Aces and Maids of all four suits and the 4 to 7 of Batons. The designs of these cards are rather stiff. The Maids stand upright on little platforms, and hold their suit-signs in their right hands. The Aces of Batons and of Swords have two lions standing on their hind legs, one on each side of the card. The Batons on the 4 to 7 are, however, arranged as in 'Spanish'-suited packs. These cards were found in the binding of a copy of the *Llibre de les Dones* printed in 1495; the article remarks on a resemblance of the lions on the Aces to ones on the title-page of a book, *Paris e Viana*, printed in Gerona in 1495, which thus seems a probable date for the cards. The sheet is in the Instituto Municipal de Historia at Barcelona. The Maids are quite similar to ones in later Portuguese packs.

[17] A reference is frequently made in the literature on playing cards to a prohibition of card games in 1387 by King Juan I of Castile. W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 72, points out, however, that, though this prohibition appears in the official code of Spanish laws of 1640, the edict as printed in the laws of Castile promulgated in 1508 omits the reference to cards, so that the edict relates only to dice and 'tables', and that an edict of 1432 by Juan II likewise covers only dice and 'tables' (backgammon). The first genuine reference is a prohibition of dice and card games of 1476 by Ferdinand and Isabella.

Swords. At least as far as the suit-signs are concerned, it must have been this type of pack which was originally used throughout Europe wherever playing cards were known. For, unlike the 'Italian' and 'Portuguese' varieties of the Latin suit-system, the 'Spanish' one seems to have been a conscious, deliberate departure from traditional forms, an invention, not of the Spanish, but of the French, cardmakers. There is, indeed, a close relationship between the actual designs of the court cards in standard French- and Spanish-suited cards; they share, moreover, the feature that the Kings are standing, not seated, another departure from tradition that we should ascribe to the French cardmakers. Some historians of playing cards have regarded the earliest Spanish-suited cards as having been made in France exclusively for export to Spain. But the French suit-system is an adaptation of the German one, and can therefore not have come into existence until a little time after the German system had crystallized; we cannot suppose it to have been invented much before the date of the earliest surviving examples of it, namely about 1480, as already remarked. Playing cards had been known in France for a hundred years before that, and so the question is there to be answered, what type of cards French card players used before the invention of the French suit-system. Without a convincing alternative answer to this question, it is irrational to assume that the only other type of playing cards we know French cardmakers to have produced were for export only. It is, in fact, apparent from various features of the design of certain early 'Spanish'-suited cards made in France that they were intended for home consumption.[18]

Evidence for the truth of this thesis can, indeed, be found among the products of modern French playing-card manufacturers. The game of Aluette, dating back to at least 1502, and requiring a 48-card Spanish-suited pack, has been played continuously in a restricted area of France, namely the western coast from the estuary of the Gironde up to Cotentin, together with the Loire valley as far as Orleans, right down to the present day. Aluette is not comparable, in respect of the pack used for it, with Trappola. Trappola was a game of Venetian origin which travelled to Central Europe, taking with it the Italian-suited pack long after it had otherwise died out there. There is, however, no reason to regard Aluette as Spanish in origin: so far as the evidence shows, it was only ever played in those areas of France just mentioned. Why, then, should it be played with a Spanish-suited pack? The only answer is that the 'Spanish'-suited pack was not, in origin, exclusively Spanish, but was in regular use in France, and that this ancient game has simply retained the cards with which it was first played. That it should have done so is due, no doubt, to the conservatism of those regions, and also to the nature of the game. Aluette is a four-handed trick-taking game with partners, each player receiving nine cards, in which that side wins to which belongs the individual player who has taken the most tricks, or, in case of equality, took them soonest. It is exceptional in that you never need to know which one of the cards in a trick was that led to it in order to tell which of them won the trick; and eight particular cards are removed from their natural place and count as the eight highest cards in the pack. These are, in descending order, the 3 of Coins (called 'Monsieur'), the 3 of Cups ('Madame'), the 2 of Coins ('le Borgne'), the 2 of Cups ('la Vache'), the 9 of Cups, the 9 of Coins, the 2 of Batons and the 2 of Swords. A player has, obviously, to memorise this sequence; if the game were to be adapted to the French-suited pack, a decision would have to be made which French suit was to correspond to each of the Latin ones. This is not an insuperable difficulty; it was done for Ombre, in which the Aces of Swords and Batons are permanently the highest and third highest trumps respectively. But players of Aluette resisted the change and retained their Spanish-suited pack down to the present day.[19]

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[18] Note, in particular, the first of two packs made by Antoine Logiriera of Toulouse (active between 1495 and 1519) and one of 1538 by Marcial Gué of Limoges, both of which bear inscriptions in French and the arms of Anne de Bretagne on the Ace of Coins; a sheet made in le Puy, one copy of which is in the Rothschild Collection at the Louvre, which has a shield with three fleurs de lys on the Ace of Coins; and the two packs by Jean Delpy of le Puy, from the 1490s, which have Queens instead of Cavaliers, and in one of which the Queen of Coins carries the arms of Charles VIII of France and of Anne de Bretagne. For these, see, respectively: Alain Borvo, *Anatomie d'un jeu: l'Aluette ou le jeu de Vache*, Nantes, 1977, fig. 19, H.-R. D'Allemagne, *Les Cartes à jouer du XVe au XXe siècle*, Paris, 1906, vol. I, p. 198, *La Carte à jouer en Languedoc des origines à 1800*, exhibition catalogue, Musée Paul Dupuy, Toulouse, 1971, no. 1; Borvo, fig. 18, D'Allemagne, vol. II, p. 445, D. Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte*, plate 10b; Borvo, fig. 20, W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 129 (wrongly captioned 'Italian cards'); and *La Carte à jouer en Languedoc*, nos. 93, 94. These packs are discussed in detail by Borvo, pp. 47-53.

The names of nineteen Barcelona cardmakers are known to us from before 1500, but there is clear evidence of the importation in the sixteenth century of cards made in France, while some German cardmakers around the end of the fifteenth century produced cards for Valencia.[20] As already remarked, the few surviving examples that we have of cards made in or for Catalonia in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century suggest that it was not the 'Spanish', but the 'Portuguese', version of the Latin-suited pack that was indigenous to Spain. Thus it is not merely that, before the invention of the French suit-system, the 'Spanish'-suited pack was used in France as well as in Spain; rather, what it is natural to think of as the Spanish system seems originally to have been the specifically French variation on the Latin type, while the original Spanish version of the Latin suit-system appears to have been that which we think of as 'Portuguese'. The German cardmakers respected the tradition of the country to which they were exporting cards, and made packs which, though German in artistic style, conformed to the then accepted norms of intersecting Batons and straight but intersecting Swords and of seated Kings and Maids in place of Jacks. Not so the French cardmakers: they exported packs to Spain which exemplified their own, highly deviant, version of the Latin system, namely the so-called 'Spanish' one. Once the French suit-system had been invented, it became largely true thereafter that most Spanish-suited packs made in France were intended for export, though, as we have seen, it is not wholly true to this day. Whether because the Spanish cardmakers could not compete with their French rivals, or because Spanish card players came to prefer the 'Spanish'-suited cards, perhaps as affording a more ready discrimination between the suits of Swords and Batons or between the different numeral cards in these suits, the version of the Latin-suited pack employed by the French cardmakers seems to have come into general use, and so into general manufacture, in Spain some time in the course of the sixteenth century. Having by then been largely superseded in its country of origin by the French suit-system, it came to be thought of in Spain as the national form of the playing-card pack, and has so remained ever since. As for the form of pack originally indigenous to Catalonia, and, most likely, to the whole Iberian peninsula, that was henceforward relegated to Portugal, and so earned its label of the 'Portuguese'-suited pack.

This 'Portuguese' form of the Latin-suited pack has the most obscure history of all the European suit-systems. As we saw, it seems to have begun as a mere alternative form of design for the Swords and Batons suits, an allowable variation within a single suit-system, not originally associated either with the replacement of Jacks by Maids or with the presence of dragons on the Aces. In Italy, some of these features, along with others peculiar to itself, were adopted for a very special enlarged form of the Tarot pack, the Minchiate pack, invented in Florence in the first half of the sixteenth century. The Minchiate pack had straight but intersecting Swords, although its Batons were the usual polished staffs of the Italian suit-system; the Aces did not have dragons on them, and although the lowest court cards were Maids in the suits of Cups and Coins, they remained Jacks in Swords and Batons. This last feature – of Maids in the two 'round' suits and Jacks in the two 'long' ones – was also adopted, in the seventeenth century, by the Bolognese Tarot pack, which, though employing a distinctive standard pattern, was otherwise of a wholly Italian-suited type, and reverted to having Jacks in all four suits in the course of the eighteenth century. The Minchiate pack can thus not be said in a straightforward sense to exemplify the Portuguese suit-system; some features of that suit-system were allotted to it at a time when, in Italy, it was not yet regarded as constituting a distinct system. It was probably the Catalan cardmakers who first converted it into a recognisably distinct system, by rendering the Swords and Batons suits only in their 'Portuguese' forms and by always having Maids instead of Jacks in all four suits – until they went over to the 'Spanish' system which had come to them from France. It is natural to assume that the addition of dragons to the Aces was a genuinely Portuguese invention, since, from the reign of John I (1384-1433) onwards, dragons served as the supporters of the Portuguese royal coat of arms; the Portuguese-suited pack, with dragon Aces, was the national suit-system of Portugal from at least the sixteenth century, and continued as such down to the nineteenth, when Portugal went over to using the French-suited pack exclusively. Even this assumption, however, is probably wrong. Within Europe, the Portuguese-suited pack was not confined to Portugal, or even to the Iberian peninsula. Regular Portuguese-suited packs from Sicily, dated 1597 and 1639, complete with dragon Aces, bear witness to this, as does a celebrated one made in 1692 by the Spanish cardmaker Infirerra for Malta. Another was made in Rome in 1613, also with dragon Aces, and a Tarot pack, employing a fully-fledged 'Portuguese' suit-system, was made by the same maker at about the same time, while in Sicily a Portuguese-suited Tarot pack is still in use at the present day. Except for the 1597 example, all these packs have a feature not found in any made in Portugal itself: every card bears an index, centrally placed at the top and bottom of the card, consisting of an Arabic numeral, or (for court cards) a letter, to indicate its rank and a letter to indicate its suit, usually placed in a rectangle. It is plain that a particular form of the Portuguese-suited pack, with indices, had a certain vogue outside Portugal during the seventeenth century. This cannot be accounted for by direct Portuguese influence, since there was no such influence either in Sicily or in mainland Italy; Sicily was under the rule of Viceroys from Aragon and, later, from united Spain from 1458 to 1713, and Spain dominated most of Italy throughout the seventeenth century. Both in Sicily and in all the southern part of Italy, including Rome and the Romagna, it was the Spanish suit-system that was in normal use for the regular pack: the existence alongside it of the 'Portuguese'-suited pack, with dragon Aces, suggests that neither the suit-system nor even the dragons were of Portuguese origin.

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[19] See Appendix 1 to this chapter.

[20] For French cards imported into Catalonia, see Madurell Marimón, op. cit., pp. 59-60, 96-7, the article in *Bibliofilia* cited in footnote 16, and Charles Jacotin de Rosières, *Recherches sur la fabrication des cartes à jouer*, Paris, 1909, p. 24, fn. 1. For cards imported from Germany, see Appendix 2 to this chapter.

Though the oldest Portuguese-suited packs made in Portugal itself that survive to us are of the seventeenth century, the pack was certainly well established in Portugal by the sixteenth. The Portuguese reached India in 1498 and Japan in 1542-3; their introduction into those lands of Portuguese-suited playing cards is witnessed to by a pack based on Portuguese designs, probably made in India in the sixteenth century, and by the earliest Japanese versions of the Portuguese-suited pack, dating from the Tenshō period (1573-92), including a wood block of about 1580 recognisably Japanese in style, but with designs exactly corresponding to the Portuguese pack.[21] The oldest surviving European Portuguese-suited pack made neither in nor for any part of the Iberian peninsula is that of 1597, already mentioned; but a recent discovery, made independently by Mr Trevor Denning and by Dr and Mrs Harold Wayland, has brought to light what may be an earlier example. In a folio of 'maps and plans' from Mexico in the Archive of the Indies in Seville, there are two uncut coloured sheets of playing cards, forming a complete 48-card pack, together with an uncoloured sheet from the same block as one of the coloured ones, several small sheets of designs for playing-card backs, one showing Montezuma, but none matching the face designs in size, and a charter dated 1583 granting to one Alonso Martinez de Orteguilla a monopoly on the manufacture and sale of playing cards in several provinces of New Spain. Denning has observed that Stewart Culin described, in the catalogue of an exhibition of 1895, a facsimile of one of the coloured sheets and a photograph of one of the sheets of back designs, both shown in the exhibition: the former bore on the back a pen-and-ink inscription 'Nueva España, 1583. Archivo de Indias, no. 117. Dibujo.' The pack is a 'Portuguese'-suited one without indices; there are dragons on the Aces, the Kings are seated and the Maids of Swords and Batons are battling with serpent-like creatures that are attacking them (a frequent feature in packs using this suit-system). The 4 of Coins carries the arms of Leon and Castile and the 6 of Coins the inscription 'Con Licencia de la M Real', and other cards bear other inscriptions. The date 1583 given on the facsimile may have been transferred, without sound warrant, from the charter. On the face of it, however, we have here a 'Portuguese'-suited pack manufactured in Spain and exported to Mexico. Dr and Mrs Wayland reject this inference, and regard the cards as made in Portugal and having no connection with the Spanish colonies; but this leaves it unexplained how they came to be in the Archive of the Indies and ignores the indications on the cards themselves that they are of Spanish origin.[22]

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[21] For a detailed and illuminating study of Portuguese-suited cards, both in Europe and in Asia, see Sylvia Mann and Virginia Wayland, *The Dragons of Portugal,* Farnham, 1973. See, in particular, pp. 15-16 and plates V, VI and X for the 1597 pack, made by Pietro Ciliberto, and pp. 28-9 and plate XI for the sixteenth-century Indian Portuguese-derived pack, now in the Spielkarten-Museum at Leinfelden; it should be noted that the Indian provenance of this latter pack is disputed by Dr R. von Leyden. The book also gives a great deal of information about Japanese cards derived from the Portuguese pack.

We thus have evidence that the 'Portuguese'-suited pack continued in use in Spain until quite late in the sixteenth century. Exactly when the change was made from it to the 'Spanish'-suited pack is difficult to say, because there are very few cards made in Spain surviving from the sixteenth century; probably the two suit-systems existed for a considerable period side by side. There is a Spanish-suited pack made in Spain and dated 1587 in the Lady Schreiber Collection in the British Museum. The Fournier Museo de Naipes at Vitoria has cards from three sixteenth-century Spanish packs, all 'Spanish'-suited, including one bearing the date 1570; it also has a sheet of 'Spanish'-suited cards which the catalogue dates to the late fifteenth century, but which may well be a good deal later, especially since, as I was informed by Mr David Temperley, there is an almost identical sheet dated 1605 in Vienna.[23] In any case, it seems likely that the 'Portuguese'-suited pack continued in use in Spain until well into the second half of the sixteenth century, and that dragons were added to the Aces there as well as in Portugal. The addition of the dragons may have been a Portuguese initiative, but it may also be due to the fact that the head of a dragon formed, from the reign of Alfonso V the Magnanimous of Aragon (1416-1458) onwards, part of the Aragonese royal crest – or, of course, it may have nothing to do with heraldry.[24] This conclusion makes it more intelligible that we should later find the pack in Rome and in Sicily, where Spanish influence was strong but contacts with Portugal were negligible. Nevertheless, the regular Portuguese-suited pack failed to establish itself anywhere in Europe save in Portugal itself, and even there has now died out. Though it was thus somewhat of a failure in Europe, it was, as we saw in Chapter 1, a great success in Asia, being the first form of European pack to be known there and being imitated in India, Java, Celebes and, above all, Japan.

Our hypothesis is that the Latin suit-signs were those used on the earliest playing cards known in Europe, and that they were, originally, those used in all countries to which playing cards spread in their first wave of dissemination in the fourteenth century. Their 'Italian' and 'Portuguese' forms were, as remarked, at that time merely admissible variants of a single type, only later differentiated as characteristic for distinct suit-systems. What was essential was not the precise shape of the Swords and Batons, but the fact that they extended the whole length of the card. This is why the 'Spanish' variant of the Latin-suited pack must be looked on as a later innovation, introduced by the French cardmakers at some indeterminate date during the fifteenth century. There is, however, one respect in which it seems unlikely that the Latin pack, as we know it, preserves the features of the earliest playing cards known in fourteenth-century Europe, namely the manner of differentiating the two lower court cards. We have seen that, for John of Rheinfelden, these were distinguished in what was to remain the Swiss and German manner, by the position of the suit-signs; and, if his account was written within two or three years of the first appearance of playing cards in Europe, it is unlikely that more than one method of differentiating them had yet developed. (It is less unlikely if the account was written a dozen years or more after playing cards first appeared.) Dr Rosenfeld has plausibly suggested that originally the two 'Marshals' – referred to as such only by John of Rheinfelden – were both mounted, and only later both shown, at first on the popular packs, as standing; and in certain of the fifteenth-century copper-engraved packs the Obers and Unters are indeed mounted. Whether or not this speculation is sound, it seems that, at least unless we accept the slightly earlier date for the introduction of playing cards in Europe advocated by Dr Kopp, we must view the distinction between the two lower court cards according to whether or not the figure is mounted, rather than by the position of the suit-sign, as having been an innovation, probably due to the Italian cardmakers; an innovation made so early, perhaps before the turn of the fourteenth century, that we have no record of it.

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[22] The sheets here discussed are in the Archivo de Indias, Casa Lonja, Seville; the full reference is: Mapas y Planas, Mexio, Legajo, Patronato 183 – Ramo 6, 73-A to 73-D. Mr Denning informs me that the Archive of the Indies was founded by King Carlos III in 1758, and incorporated many hitherto scattered collections. Culin's reference is in S. Culin, *Chess and Playing-Cards* (exhibition catalogue), Report of the National Museum, 1896, pp. 665-942, separately published, Philadelphia, 1897, item no. 96, pp. 934-5. The Spanish inscriptions could be explained by the fact that Portugal was united with Spain from 1580 to 1640.

[23] The three sets of sixteenth-century playing cards in the Fournier Museum are nos. 3, 4 and 5 in the Spanish section of the catalogue, and the allegedly fifteenth-century sheet is no. 1. Of possible relevance to the persistence in Spain of the 'Portuguese' suit-system are some cards made in Provence in about 1545 in the Spielkarten-Museum at Leinfelden, illustrated in D. Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte*, plate 11a, which have some 'Portuguese' characteristics: the illustration shows a seated King of Batons, the Batons being rather knobbly, and a 9 of Swords with straight intersecting Swords, but a Jack, rather than a Maid, of Coins. A 'Spanish'-suited pack made by Martial Gué of Limoges about 1538 has a mermaid on the Ace of Coins and a dragon on the Ace of Swords; see H.-R. D'Allemagne, *Les Cartes à jouer*, vol. II, Paris, 1906, p. 445. Further discussion of 'Portuguese-suited cards, as used in Sicily and mainland Italy, will be found in Chapters 19 and 20.

[24] See S. Mann and V. Wayland, op. cit., p. 1, for dragons as supporters of the Portuguese royal coat of arms, and p. 2 for the dragon's head in the Aragonese royal crest. The dates 1435-1437 given for Alfonso V's reign are an error.

The hypothesis that, in the first instance, playing cards everywhere in Europe where they were known at all bore the Latin suit-signs yields a vivid picture of the differing policies adopted by cardmakers in the different areas. The Italian cardmakers, apart from their one early (conjectural) innovation of replacing the pair Ober/Unter by the pair Cavalier/Jack, displayed a resolute conservatism, never deviating from the original suit-system that dated from the first introduction of playing cards. The German ones, by contrast, went in for hectic experimentation with suit-symbols, probably from quite early in the fifteenth century, and only in the second half of the century settled down to the regular though not yet exclusive use of what was henceforward the German national suit-system. On our hypothesis, this must be interpreted, not, as by Kopp, as the continuation of a primeval chaos, but as a search for a selection of symbols generally acceptable because suited to the culture. An analogy would be the replacement in Mongolia in the early years of this century of the French suit-signs by Pinnacles, Flowers, Swastikas and Clouds.[25] A similar search appears to have been conducted by the Swiss cardmakers of the fifteenth century, with at least one alternative system taking root for a time. Some historians have, indeed, attempted to view the individual German and Swiss suit-signs as derived from specific Latin ones; but there is absolutely no evidence to support this. In contrast both to the Italian and to the German and Swiss ones, the French cardmakers neither adhered to tradition nor experimented at random: they made changes for practical, commercial reasons. The first change made by them, around 1460 or possibly earlier, was the alteration of the existing Latin suit-signs to their 'Spanish' form, and, at the same time, the replacement of seated Kings by standing ones. The cards resulting from this innovation were easier for the card player to identify at a glance, and less costly for the cardmaker to produce. These advantages attached, to a far greater degree, to their second innovation, the French suit-system.

The French suit-system, appearing about 1480, should certainly be seen as an adaptation of the German one, with Spades (*Piques*) corresponding to Leaves, Clubs (*Trèfles*) to Acorns and, of course, French Hearts (*Coeurs*) to German ones. The shapes of the French suit-signs, in all three cases, are regularised versions of those of the German signs. The only failure of correspondence is between Diamonds (*Carreaux*) and Bells; and, even there, one early French pack has Crescents in place of Diamonds, tallying more closely with the round shape of the Bells.[26] This change was a brilliant commercial stroke by the French cardmakers. The Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Swiss and German suit-signs are all representations, however stylised, of actual objects, usually multi-coloured and varying in size according to how many have to be got on to the card, and, on the court cards, often an integral feature of the design of the figure. The French suit-signs are monochromatic silhouettes, constant in size and simple in shape, and never held in the hand of any of the court figures, as frequently happens on the court cards of other suit-systems and must have originally been the universal practice. This innovation had an immense commercial advantage. The French cardmakers had for the most part already removed from the numeral cards of the 'Spanish'-suited pack most of the extraneous floral decoration or vignettes that embellish those of Italian or German packs (and of the 'Portuguese'-suited ones made in Catalonia), although these reappear on some later Spanish-suited cards. Now they removed them altogether from the numeral cards of the new French-suited packs. The result is an aesthetic impoverishment, but a commercial coup of the first magnitude. For now it was no longer necessary to print outline designs by wood block for any of the numeral cards: each numeral card could be produced by the use of a single stencil. In consequence, a wood block for printing the designs for a French-suited pack need bear designs only for the twelve court cards. Obviously, this made the production of a pack of cards a far cheaper process. By this invention of genius, the French cardmakers had gained a signal advantage over their competitors in other lands. It is therefore unsurprising that in the Low Countries, in England and in Scandinavia the French suit-system came to be adopted in exclusion to all others, nor that it eventually invaded Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal and Spain, to compete there with what had become the national suit-systems, ousting them in some regions, though not to this day in others. We should, rather, be surprised that its triumph was not immediate: the survival of the other suit-systems is a striking instance of the tenacity of cultural traditions in the face of strong economic incentive to abandon them.

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[25] See Rintchen, 'Mongol Kŏjur: le Jeu de Cartes Mongol', *Studia Orientalia*, vol. XVIII, no. 4, 1955, pp. 3-7, and R. von Leyden, 'Tibetan and Mongol Playing-Cards', *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. V, no. 1, August 1976, pp. 29-31.

[26] A sheet made by François Clerc of Lyons between 1485 and 1496; see D. Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte*, plate 43a. The sheet is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

German experimentation extended not only to the suit-signs, but to every other feature of the playing-card pack: to the number of suits, the number and identity of the court cards and the composition of each suit. We have already seen that, on the testimony of the *Tractatus de moribus* as we have it, there were packs with five or six suits by 1429, and that some examples of five-suited fifteenth-century packs survive; we have seen also that there is evidence of a fashion for packs with a large number of suits in the early sixteenth century. The German cardmakers appear also to have been responsible for the introduction of the Queen into the playing-card pack; and it will gladden supporters of women's lib to know that she originally entered it, not as inferior to the King, but as his equal. The *Tractatus de moribus* describes packs in which, in all four suits, or in two of the four, all the court figures are female; the hand-painted pack at Stuttgart is a surviving example of this latter type. In yet other packs we find female Unters. What was probably a subsequent development yielded packs in which all four suits have a King, Queen, Ober and Unter, of which the Ambraser hunting pack is an example; indeed, there are almost as many surviving fifteenth-century German packs with four court cards per suit as with three. The *Tractatus* does not mention these; but it does mention, with great enthusiasm, a type that has not survived, with fifteen cards in each of the four suits, including King, Queen, Ober ('Marshal'), Unter ('Marshal') and Maid. It was not until the early sixteenth century that the packs with four court cards finally died out, and the German court settled down to its original three members. We know of no regular Latin-suited packs with more than three court cards; but, when the French cardmakers introduced their great innovation, the French-suited pack, they borrowed from the German packs with four court cards the figure of the Queen (*Dame* in French) as a replacement for the Cavalier. If we look on the French-suited pack as a modification of the German-suited one, this was presumably done to avoid the inconvenience to card players of having to look at the bottom of the card for the suit-sign in the case of the Unter; at the same time, a standing Queen is easier to draw than a mounted Cavalier.

The German and Swiss cardmakers also made a further innovation by often representing the 10 of each suit, not by a pip card with ten suit-signs, but by a card displaying a banner bearing a single suit-sign, such as we have seen to be present in the Swiss-suited pack to this day. This card, although more often than not bearing a Roman X to indicate its rank, was naturally often known as the *Banner* or *Panier*. The Banner form of the 10 never drove out the pip card form in Germany, surviving alongside it until the middle of the sixteenth century and then dying out. In Switzerland, both forms were known, but the Banner 10 was regarded as integral to that suit-system which became the national one, and the Swiss pack has retained it ever since that system defeated its rivals. There is no indication, however, that the Swiss ever admitted a Queen or any other female figure to the playing-card court before the introduction of French-suited cards, or that they ever experimented with more than three court cards or more than four suits; nor do they appear to have made either copper-engraved or hand-painted cards.

When there were only four suits, the addition of the Queen made a total of 56 cards, as in the hand-painted Ambraser pack. Evidently this size of pack found little favour, since the 10, in either form, was rapidly eliminated from German regular packs with four court cards in each suit, although it was retained in all those with only three court cards. Independently of this, however, the pack came to be reduced to 48 cards: this happened not only in Germany and Switzerland, but also, though in a different manner, with the 'Spanish'-suited pack, and occasionally, though not usually, with the Italian-suited one. The reason always given for this relates to the process of manufacture by means of wood blocks. A pack of 48 cards could be printed from two wood blocks, each sheet bearing 24 cards, arranged in three rows of eight or four rows of six. By contrast, there was no convenient way to print a pack of 52 cards from two wood blocks; in consequence, three would have to be used, some cards being duplicated. It is very probable that this was indeed the reason for the reduction of the pack to 48 cards in Germany, Switzerland, Spain and Portugal; and this is corroborated by the fact that when the French cardmakers adopted the French suit-system, which made it irrelevant how many numeral cards there were, since they had to print only the court cards, they restored the original number of thirteen cards per suit. Nevertheless, this change can hardly have been effected without the promotion of games which required only 48 cards, for otherwise, unless the price differential was very steep indeed, one can hardly imagine card players meekly accepting reduced packs if the games they wanted to play demanded 52 cards. Possibly the promotion by cardmakers of games requiring only 48 cards was an early example of the phenomenon exemplified in this century by the commercial promotion of Canasta.

The 'Spanish'-suited pack, introduced, on the present hypothesis, by the French cardmakers, was restricted to 48 cards by the omission from each suit of the highest-numbered card, the 10, which only in the rarest cases has appeared in that suit-system, in any of its forms, since its first invention; the suppression of the 10 formed the model for the subsequent shortening of the Spanish-suited pack to 40 cards by omitting also the 9s and 8s. The early Catalan cards, representing the prototype of what was to become the 'Portuguese'-suited pack, do appear to have had 10s, but almost all later Portuguese-suited packs lack them, though there is an example to the contrary in the Leber Collection at the Municipal Library in Rouen. But, in Germany and Switzerland, the reduction of the pack from 52 to 48 cards was effected in a manner very surprising to modern card players, namely by the elimination of the Ace; and this happened both in packs with three court cards and a 10 or Banner, and in ones with four court cards and no 10. The reason is that the Ace did not originally have its usual present high position in each suit: it was simply a card that stood at one end of the numerical sequence from 1 to 10. So far as we have any particular reason to believe, in Germany and Switzerland the original ranking of the cards in each suit was with the court cards at the top, headed by the King, followed by the numeral cards from 10 to Ace, in descending numerical order: the omission of the Aces thus constituted the removal from each suit of its lowest card. Once gone, the Ace never reappeared in the Swiss pack; in fact, there is no record of any Swiss-suited pack ever having contained it, save in the description in the *Tractatus de moribus.* In Germany, the Ace did reappear in two exceptional types of sixteenth-century pack, to both of which Detlef Hoffmann has drawn attention. One was the many-suited pack, of up to sixteen suits, apparently in vogue at the very beginning of the century, which has already been mentioned. The other is a curious type of which we have several specimens, one by Hans Hauk of Frankfurt in 1558, and the others by his son Heinrich Hauk in the 1580s. In none of these does the Deuce appear, but they have Aces, each of which bears the inscription *Nit gwis* or *Nit gewis* (i.e. *nicht gewiss*, 'not certain').[27] Both of these, however, were deviant forms: for the main stream of the popular German playing-card pack, the Ace must be considered as having irretrievably disappeared by the 1470s. It cannot have been until the Aces had gone for good from the German- and Swiss-suited packs that the influence of foreign card games of the trick-taking type in which the Ace was high made itself felt in Germany and Switzerland. When this happened, the 2 or Deuce was made to play the role of the Ace in other packs. After the further reduction of the pack to 36 cards by the omission of the 3s, 4s and 5s, it became easy to overlook the historical identity of the Deuce, and we have seen that it has now been almost wholly assimilated to the Ace of other packs; the process was not, however, completed until the present century.

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[27] Four Aces and a 7 of Bells by Hans Hauk are in the Spielkarten-Museum at Leinfelden; see D. Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte,* plate 39a. Five sheets by Heinrich Hauk for packs of this type are at Frankfurt (Historisches Museum); see Hoffmann, *Inventarkatalog*, Frankfurt, 1972, nos. 25-9, and Albertina catalogue, no. 67. One, a sheet showing 32 cards, with the standard German suit-signs, like all cards of this type, and the values King, Ober, Unter, Banner 10, 9, 8, 7 and Ace, may possibly represent a complete pack; the Albertina has a very similar sheet. Other sheets have repetitions, so that more than one block would have been needed for a complete pack; but it has been

In Italy and Spain, the original card order was even more unlike the usual modern practice. In all four suits, the court cards ranked as the highest; but we have clear evidence from literary sources[28] that, in Italy up to about 1500, and in Spain well into the sixteenth century, the subsequent ordering of the numeral cards in two of the suits differed from that in the other two. Thus in Swords and Batons, the cards ranked, in descending order: King, Cavalier, Jack, (10), 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, Ace; while in Cups and Coins they ranked, in descending order: King, Cavalier, Jack, Ace, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, (10). This curious practice, of purely picturesque significance, survives in three games or families of games: the Spanish game of Ombre (called Tresillo in Spain itself, and Ombre or L'Hombre elsewhere, and once played all over Europe), together with its derivatives; the Irish game of Spoil Five; and most of the games played with one or other form of the Tarot pack. In other games, it has long been discarded as an irrelevant strain on the attention. Spoil Five, well known in England under the name Maw in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, looks like a game invented by someone with an imperfect memory of Ombre. Ombre itself is complicated by the fact that the Aces of Swords and Batons serve as permanent trumps in addition to whichever suit becomes the trump suit, and that one or two of the cards of the trump suit are promoted above the position they occupy in the plain suits; it would therefore be almost impossible to disentangle the practice of reversing the order of the numeral cards in two of the suits without disturbing the essential features of the game, and it is presumably for this reason that the practice has been retained in this game and its derivatives. In all games played with the Tarot pack, on the other hand, save that peculiar to Bologna, the practice could be, and in some cases has been, abolished without affecting the game in the least: we can only suppose that it was retained as a picturesque feature appropriate to a game played with what appeared, outside Italy, as a highly picturesque form of pack. Here, again, however, we have a feature that is not, in origin, peculiar to the Tarot pack, but was at the outset simply the ordinary practice for all card games requiring a ranking of the cards, that is, primarily trick-taking games. As remarked, there is no evidence that the practice was ever followed in Germany or Switzerland; it may well be that, in those countries, card players ignored it from the start, assigning a higher rank in every suit to the higher numeral cards.

How, and why, the Ace rose to the topmost position in games played with Latin- and

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pointed out by Hoffmann that in none of them do any of the values from 2 to 6 occur. He has accordingly suggested that packs of this type contained only 32 cards. If he is right, it is very surprising, since, with this exception, shortened packs continued, both in France and Germany, to include the 6s until about 1700, and thus had 36 cards. The significance of the inscription *Nit gwis* is in any case obscure. The only possibility that occurs to me is that such packs could have been intended for a game of chance of the type of Baccarat or Thirty-One, in which the Ace could have the value 1 or 11 at the player's choice. Thirty-One is sometimes played in that manner, and was certainly played in Germany, being mentioned by Hans Sachs (see the edition of A. von Keller, in the *Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart*, vol. V. Tübingen, 1908, p. 226). It was moreover sometimes played with a shortened pack; but Daniel Martin, in chap. 74 of the *Parlement Nouveau*, says specifically that the Ace counts only 1 point, since, if it were allowed to count 11, it would be possible for a player to obtain 31 points with only three cards.

[28] See Galeotti Martii Narniensis *De doctrina promiscua*, Florence, 1548, chap. 36 (at end), p. 433; I do not know the date of the first edition of this book, but Marzio Galeotti died in 1478. For testimony to the antiquity of this practice in games played with the Tarot pack, see the commentary by Pier Antonio Viti to 'I Tarocchi' by Matteo Maria Boiardo, composed before 1500, either in *Le Poesi volgari e latine di Matteo Maria Boiardo*, ed. Angelo Solerti, Bologna, 1894, pp. 313-38, or *Tutte le opere di Matteo Maria Boiardo*, ed. A. Zottoli, Milan, 1936-7, vol. II, pp. 702-16. For the Spanish practice, see *Linguae latinae exercitatio J.L. Vivis Valentini*, Basle, 1541, Dialogus xxi, 'Ludus chartarum seu foliorum'; Vives died in 1540. Possibly connected with this practice is John of Rheinfelden's odd remark that some of the suit-signs are considered good and others have an evil significance.

French-suited packs is quite obscure. In the first half of the sixteenth century, the game of Trappola, already mentioned, a trick-taking game in which the cards rank in the same order in every suit and the Ace is the highest card of each suit, became popular in Venice.[29] In England a game called Triumph, an ancestor of Whist, was played from the early sixteenth century;[30] the natural presumption is that from the start the Ace was the highest card in each suit, as it certainly was in later forms of the game, although a remark in a sermon of Latimer's in 1529 suggests that possibly the King was still the highest card. In France a distinct game called Triomphe, which has survived to the present day, was played at least as early as 1534, on the testimony of Rabelais;[31] it may have been played as early as 1482,[32] although it is difficult to know whether this, or the game played by René II, Duke of Lorraine, in 1496, was the same game or one for which the Tarot pack was used. We have no description of Triomphe until the seventeenth century, at which time the Ace ranked below the three court cards but above the 10 and other numeral cards, ranking in descending order, as it does also in the derivative game of Écarté. Possibly this gives us a clue to the process by which the Ace came to be promoted. If, originally, the numeral cards ranked in different orders in the two pairs of suits, so that, in Cups and Coins, or in Hearts and Diamonds, the Ace ranked immediately below the court cards, then, when the order was rationalised so as to be the same in all suits, the Ace may in every suit have been allotted the relatively high position it had held in two of them, only later climbing, in most games, to the highest position of all. But this is flimsy speculation: at present, the rise of the Ace remains a problem.

Italy remained as unaffected by the German experimentation with numeral cards and court cards as by that with the suit-signs. There is, indeed, some literary evidence that there were some regular Italian-suited packs with four court cards, a Queen being added;[33] if so, it does not seem that the experiment was any great success, and no such packs have survived. The only possible known example of an Italian pack with Banner 10s was probably an import from Germany.[34] Around the end of the century some packs appear to have been made without 10s, identical in composition, therefore, with the 48-card Spanish-suited packs;[35] but these, too, appear to have been an exception. By and large, the regular Italian pack remained quite unchanged throughout the century. It would, however, be quite misleading to think of Italian cardmakers as wholly conservative and unenterprising. On the contrary, they made one innovation of more importance, not only to the design, but to the use, of playing cards than all the novelties of the German, Swiss and French cardmakers put together. This was the invention of the Tarot pack. That invention, and its significance, will be our concern in Chapters 4 to 7.

By 1550, the experiments that proved ephemeral had been abandoned, and the various European types of regular pack had crystallised into more or less their definitive forms: in Italy, the 52-card Italian-suited pack; in Portugal, the 48-card Portuguese-suited pack, and, in France and Spain, the 48-card Spanish-suited one; in France, England and the Low Countries, the 52-card French-suited form; in Germany and Switzerland, the German- and Swiss-suited packs with 48 cards. We have thus surveyed the first one and three-quarter centuries of the history of the regular playing-card pack in Europe, from about 1375 until the middle of the sixteenth century, and the sometimes complicated process by which, during that period, the various national suit-systems emerged. By contrast, the history of the European regular playing-card pack during the remaining four and a quarter centuries down to the present day has been extraordinarily uneventful, at least when seen from a distance, as we are viewing it. A long and intricate account would be needed if we were to trace the origins and evolution of the various standard patterns that are and have been used for each of the different types of regular pack; but in this book we shall not concern ourselves with these, but shall rest content with surveying only the broad outlines. There have indeed been changes, particularly since the middle of the nineteenth century, that have profoundly affected both card players and card manufacturers: the introduction, into most standard patterns, of double-headed cards and of corner indices;[36] the addition of the Joker to the French-suited pack;[37] the change from square corners to rounded ones; the adoption of modern techniques of manufacture; and, as a consequence of these techniques, the replacement of small workshops by large factories. This last change has eliminated the multiplicity of craftsmen who used to work principally for the local market; playing-card manufacture is no longer profitable except with a vast turnover, so that in most countries – Italy is the principal exception – one manufacturer has obtained a near or actual monopoly. But changes of these kinds are not our concern, which is solely with the composition of different types of pack; and, in this respect, very little has happened to the European regular pack during the last four hundred years. Indeed, essentially only two things have happened: alterations in the geographical diffusion of the various suit-systems; and the introduction of shortened packs. We may therefore conclude this chapter by bringing the history down to the present in just two paragraphs.

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[29] The earliest reference known to me is in Francesco Marcolino's *Giardino di pensieri*, Venice, 1540, but by then the game was evidently well known.

[30] The earliest reference is in Henry Watson's *The chirche of the evyll men & women* of 1522.

[31] See *Gargantua*, vol. I, chap. 22: this is not a game played with the Tarot pack, since that is separately mentioned.

[32] See F. Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française, Complément*, s. v. *triomphe*.

[33] The passage of Marzio Galeotti's book mentioned in footnote 28 contains the phrase *regum, reginarum, equitum peditumque potentiam* apropos of playing cards, with no apparent reference to the Tarot pack. The sermon of St Bernardine of Siena against gaming, preached in 1423, mentions first *reges atque reginae* and then *milites superiores et inferiores*, in a passage that betrays no knowledge of the Tarot pack, which may well not have been invented by that date; see *S. Bernardini Senensis O.F.M. Opera Omnia*, ed. PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, vol. II, Florence, 1950, Sermo 42 'contra alearum ludos', p. 23.

[34] See Appendix 3 to this chapter for a discussion of this pack.

[35] Sheets I-1009 and I-1010 in the Cary Collection at Yale University form one probable example; the sheets at the Fournier Museum, Vitoria (no. 1 in the Italian section of the catalogue), form another.

The great success story has, of course, been that of the French suit-system; but the Spanish-suited pack has also had successes. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Spanish game of Primero, called in Italian Primiera, was popular in Italy, and Spanish card-playing practice was always to remain influential there. The Kingdom of Naples was conquered by Aragon in 1442, and was under the direct rule of united Spain from 1500 until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713; indeed, save for Venice and Savoy, most of the peninsula was effectively under Spanish control from 1530 until that date. It was therefore natural that the Spanish-suited form of the Latin pack should displace the Italian-suited one over most of Italy, especially in Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples, but also in most of the Romagna save independent-minded Bologna. As for the French-suited pack, it had two periods of expansion. It was adopted in the sixteenth century in England and the Low Countries, and spread also to Savoy and the French-speaking cantons of Switzerland. But it was not until the eighteenth century that it made its great advance by invading Germany, Austria and Italy. At the present day, it is more in use in Germany and in Central Europe than the German-suited pack, though the latter continues to be used in certain regions. In Italy, the type of suit-system employed, Italian, Spanish or French, as well as the particular standard pattern, depends very much upon local tradition: the French-suited pack predominates in Tuscany, most of Lombardy, Piedmont and Genoa. In Portugal, the Portuguese-suited pack has disappeared altogether in favour of the French-suited one. Only in Spain does the Latin-suited pack continue throughout the country to enjoy a far greater popularity than its French-suited rival.

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[36] The idea of double-headed cards originated in the later eighteenth century, and spread slowly from one standard pattern to another, rather than from country to country; some standard patterns, such as the Neapolitan and Sicilian, have not adopted it yet. Among the earliest packs to go double-headed was the Tarocco Bolognese; and, although single-ended French-suited Tarot packs were produced up to about 1840, double-headed ones appeared as early as 1780. This is unsurprising, since the Tarot pack contains more picture cards than the regular pack. The earliest double-headed French-suited regular pack was produced in Austria in the late eighteenth century, and, among Italian-suited packs, those using the Venetian pattern assumed a double-headed form at about the same time. The Paris pattern, used throughout France, became double-headed in 1827, and by 1830 double-headed cards were more common than single-ended ones in most European countries. Britain and the U.S.A lagged behind other Western countries in this matter: double-headed cards first appeared in England soon after 1850, and became established only in the 1860s; in the United States the earliest example is from 1861, but the form took root only in the 1870s. Corner indices, on the other hand, are an American invention, from shortly before 1870, probably prompted by the needs of Poker players. They were adopted in most European countries in the 1890s, though Austria and Italy have been resistant.

[37] As observed in Chapter 1, the Joker was another American invention, from about 1857. It, too, may have been introduced for Poker in the first place, though the earliest printed reference to its use in that game known to me is from *The Standard Hoyle* (New York, 1899, p. 147), for a variant called by the French name of 'Mistigris'; but, even if it was introduced for Poker, it was quickly adapted for the game of Euchre. In Euchre the Jack of the trump suit is promoted to be the highest card, being known as the 'Right Bower'; the Jack of the other suit of the same colour becomes the second highest trump, called 'Left Bower'. When the Joker is used, it is, as 'Best Bower', the highest trump of all. ('Bower' is a corruption of German *Bauer*, used in Alsace, from where Euchre or Juker originated, as the ordinary word for 'Jack'.) The Joker arrived in Europe from the United States in the 1880s, along with the game of Poker (and, in England, that of Euchre). The Joker was also used for a later invader from the U.S.A., Rummy. It is normally added only to French-suited packs and, among them, to ones with 52 cards, Euchre being the only game played with a shortened pack in which it is used. The most popular German variant of Rummy demands three Jokers, but in Britain only one was required until the advent of Canasta in the 1950s, which demanded two per pack.

The only substantial change in the actual make-up of the different forms of the regular pack that has occurred since 1550 has been the introduction of shortened packs. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, a number of games came into fashion played with packs reduced in size by the omission of some of the numeral cards. Originally, this shortening was effected, everywhere but in Spain, by the omission of the lower numeral cards of each suit, other than the Ace, which had already become high-ranking, to form a pack of 36 cards. We are accustomed to speak of a 32-card pack as a Piquet pack; but in fact Piquet was originally played with a 36-card pack, formed by omitting the numeral cards from 2 to 5 from the French-suited pack. The game of Trappola is the only sixteenth-century Italian game of which we know, not of Spanish origin, played with a shortened pack. It, too, employed a 36-card pack, but, in this case, one from which it was the numeral cards from 3 to 6 that were omitted; the explanation is that, in this game, the lowest card of each suit, the 2, plays an especially important role. In the seventeenth century, the practice of shortening the pack spread to Germany and Switzerland; there, of course, it was necessary to omit only the cards from 3 to 5 to obtain a 36-card pack, the Deuce being high in imitation of the Ace of the French-suited pack. It was in about 1700 that the Piquet pack was further shortened in France to 32 cards by the omission of the 6s;[38] the 36-card pack lingered on there until at least 1775. In the eighteenth century, games with 32 cards came to be played in Germany, although ones requiring 36 cards never wholly lost their popularity; the Swiss-suited pack, on the other hand, has never been employed for games with only 32 cards. In contrast to all this, the Spaniards proceeded in a quite different way. They, too, devised many games played with shortened packs. But, in the shorter form of their pack, they kept as many as 40 cards, and they arrived at it in the opposite manner to that used by everyone else, namely by omitting the higher numeral cards, the 8s and 9s, instead of the lower ones. The Spanish game of Ombre, played with a 40-card pack, spread all over Europe, and, as already remarked, was the most successful single card game before the invention of Bridge; several other Spanish card games gained widespread popularity, in France, in England and, above all, in Italy. For these games, 40-card Italian- and French-suited packs, having the same numeral cards as the Spanish-suited packs, were often used; this practice was not, however, observed with the Swiss- and German-suited packs. Although the practice of playing with a shortened pack dates from the sixteenth century, it does not appear to have been until the subsequent century that cardmakers began to cater for it, at least on any large scale, by offering for sale already shortened packs; but, as soon as they did, such packs came, in many areas, to oust the full forms. The full 52-card French-suited pack has, of course, never been ousted, either in France or elsewhere; and though the Italian-suited pack is mostly found shortened in the Spanish manner, its full 52-card form maintains a precarious existence. In Spain itself the full 48-card Spanish-suited pack still flourishes; but it disappeared from Italy during the eighteenth century. The 48-card German-suited pack disappeared from Germany and Central Europe at the same time. The 48-card Swiss-suited pack is still used for one ancient game played in one locality; with this one exception, it, too, has been ousted by the 36-card form.

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[38] The 1697 edition of the *Académie Universelle des Jeux* still describes Piquet as played with 36 cards, but that of 1702 gives the number of cards as 32. Likewise, the 1687 edition of the *Compleat Gamester* retains unmodified the description of the game as played with 36 cards, while the editions from 1709 on add a note giving the modifications in the rules required for play with 32 cards and stating that that is the current practice.

Appendix 1: Aluette

The Aluette pack, in its present form, has many peculiarities: the Cavaliers are female, and the four top cards, called *luettes*, have features of design corresponding to the individual names they bear; in particular, the 2 of Cups, *la Vache*, depicts a recumbent cow below the suit-signs. The illuminating study by Alain Borvo cited in footnote 18, and previously published in *Le Vieux Papier*, vol. XXVII, 1974, pp. 169-85, 213-30, 247-59, vol. XXVIII, 1976, pp. 457-63, 501-8, shows that these special features were all introduced in the nineteenth century: during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Aluette was played with a Spanish-suited pack, manufactured in various parts of France, that lacked these eccentricities, although conforming to a definite standard pattern. A cow, standing and placed between the two suit-signs, appears on the 2 of Cups on the le Puy sheet mentioned in footnote 18, and also in a second pack by Logiriera, destined for Navarre (see Borvo, fig. 19, and D'Allemagne, vol. II, p. 388), along with other animals and figures on other cards. Borvo very plausibly concludes (p. 50) from the different appearance of the cow that the nineteenth-century cardmakers were prompted to restore the cow, not by any continuous tradition of design, but by the retention of the name *la Vache* for the card, a name surviving from the sixteenth century when the 2 of Cups had been thus decorated. It cannot be deduced, however, that the Logiriera and le Puy packs were specifically intended for Aluette, which is not known ever to have been played in Navarre.

The earliest reference to Aluette found by Borvo is from 1502, when, he says, Anne de Bretagne, then Queen of France and wife of Louis XII, initiated the fashion of this new game by playing it with the Archduke Philip the Fair (son of the Emperor Maximilian and father of Charles V), who was then at Lyons convalescing from an illness (pp. 24, 55-6). As authorities for this statement Borvo cites Paul Lacroix, *Louis XII et Anne de Bretagne*, Paris, 1882, p. 252 (actually p. 262), Georges-Gustave Toudouze, *Anne, duchesse de Bretagne, reine de France*, Paris, 1959, p. 236 (p. 219 in the 1938 edition), and Émile Gabory, *Anne de Bretagne, duchesse et reine*, Paris, 1941, p. 194. Lacroix says nothing about Aluette's being a new game or about its coming into fashion, but merely remarks that Philip played the game with the Queen (*il joua, avec la reine, à un jeu de cartes nommé l'alluette*); he cites no authority, but he must certainly have had one. Toudouze expressly disclaims having written a work of scholarship; his book is, he says, one of 'impressions'. His source for the remark about Aluette is almost certainly Lacroix, but he has embroidered a bit: 'to distract her sick guest,' he said, 'Anne even initiated the fashion for a quite new game of cards, Aluette' (*pour distraire son hôte malade, Anne lance même la mode d'un jeu de cartes tout nouveau*: l'Aluette'). I have not seen Gabory's book, but it also probably relies on Lacroix. We can be sure that the game existed in 1502, but not that it was then a new one. The game was also mentioned by Rabelais in 1532 (book II, chap. 5; cf. book I, chap. 22 and book V, chap. 23). Borvo has made a systematic search to discover the geographical extension of the game, and states (p. 22) that he has found no proof of its existence south of the Gironde, in the Basque country, in Spain, in Portugal or in Latin America. In spite of this, he inclines (p. 55) to the theory that it was of Spanish or Portuguese origin. If it originated in France, he remarks, that would imply that Spanish-suited cards were indigenous to the regions in which it was played. Quite so: given no reason to believe it anything but French, that is the natural conclusion. He concedes that cards were played in France before the French suit-signs were invented, but asks whether the cards then used were Spanish-suited. We can only answer 'Yes': this is the only kind for which we have any evidence.

The practice of signalling possession of particular cards to one's partner by means of conventional gestures, observed in Aluette, is no guide to its origin; it is found, not only in the Spanish game of Brisca and the Basque game of Mus, but in the games of Watten and Perlaggen, played in Bavaria and the Tyrol, and of Träntne and Flüsslen, played in Schwyz, of Kaiserjass, played in Nidwalden, both in Switzerland, and of Briscola, played throughout Italy. A better comparison, among Spanish games, would be with el Truco, now much played in Argentina, with the related French game of le Truc and English game of Putt. Putt, described in Charles Cotton's *The Compleat Gamester*, 1674, pp. 131-7, and in later editions, was played with the 52-card pack in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A trick-taking game, usually for two players, it differed much from Aluette in that each player was dealt only three cards. The card order was unusual, the cards ranking, in descending order, 3, 2, Ace, King, Queen, Jack and then 10 down to 4; in this, it resembled games of the Italian Tressette family, played with the 40-card pack. The resemblance to Aluette lies in the unusual feature that suit is quite irrelevant in Putt: not only need a player not follow suit, but a trick was won by the highest-ranking card played, irrespective of suit; if both cards were of the same rank, neither won the trick. Let us call trick-taking games of this kind 'rank-only' games; Tressette is not one of these, only a card of the suit led being able to win the trick in Tressette, as in almost all games without trumps. Aluette is a rank-only game, modified by the presence of the eight high cards, which beat all others. The remaining cards rank, in descending order, as follows: the Aces, the Kings, the Cavaliers, the Jacks, the 9s of Swords and Batons, the 8s, the 7s, the 6s, the 5s, the 4s and the 3s of Swords and Batons. El Truco, as described in *Juegos de Naipes*, Barcelona, 1963, pp. 123-43, is played by varying numbers of players; it resembles Putt in that each player has only three cards, and Aluette in being a rank-only game modified by the presence of four high cards, or *cartas bravas*, which beat all the others, namely, in descending order, the Ace of Swords, the Ace of Batons, the 7 of Swords and the 7 of Cups. The game is played with 40 cards, and the remaining cards rank, in descending order, thus: the 3s, the 2s, the Aces of Cups and Coins, the Kings, the Cavaliers, the Jacks, the 7s of Cups and Batons, the 6s, the 5s and the 4s. The French variant, le Truc, described in E. Lanes, *Nouveau Manuel Complet des Jeux de Cartes,* Paris, 1912, and in Sid Sackson, *A Gamut of Games*, New York, 1969, seems to stem from a version preceding the introduction of the *cartas bravas*, since it is an unmodified rank-only game, for two players, again with only three cards apiece. It is now played with the 32-card French-suited pack, the cards ranking, in descending order, 7, 8, Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10 and 9. In this game, however, the 8s are referred to as 6s. Though neither Lanes nor Sackson could explain this eccentricity, it plainly indicates that the game was introduced into France at a time when the 36-card French-suited pack was in use, and hence probably in the seventeenth century (the change from 36- to 32-card Piquet occurred about 1700, although D'Allemagne, op. cit., vol II, pp. 374, 400, records that 36-card packs went on being sold until at least 1775). Having no 3s or 2s, French players must have adapted the el Truco ranking by elevating the 7s and 6s, in that order, to the highest position; when the 36-card pack ceased to be available, they had to substitute 8s for the 6s. (See M. Dummett, 'Bluff, Counter Bluff', *Games and Puzzles*, no. 5, September 1972, pp. 16-17.)

It is evident that Putt, el Truco and Aluette, so different from most trick-taking games, must be connected. The antiquity of Aluette rules out the possibility of an English origin for the family; but, although le Truc itself is evidently derived from el Truco, and not conversely, there is no evidence that el Truco is of an antiquity comparable with that of Aluette, and, as a game played with the shortened 40-card pack, it is quite likely to be less old than it. This family of games may well have originated, as a family, in France rather than in Spain; there is therefore still no reason to consider Aluette anything other than French.

Appendix 2: Playing cards made in Germany for Catalonia

Several copper-engraved packs were made in Germany, probably for export to Aragon. A set of three such cards, the King, Cavalier and Maid of Coins, is in the Kupferstichkabinett in West Berlin; see Duran-Sanpere, plate 126, and the Albertina catalogue, plate 30a. Each of the three figures holds a coin; those of the Cavalier and Maid bear the arms of Aragon, and the inscription round the edge includes the word VALENCIA; that of the King, who is seated, bears the seal of Juan II of Aragon (1456-1479). In his booklet on the pack by the 'oberdeutscher Stecher', Fritz Koreny relates these cards stylistically to the work of the Master of the Berlin Passion. They are therefore probably not Spanish, but from a German pack intended for export; but they were certainly destined for Valencia. There are two *putti* on the King's throne, and another standing behind the Maid. Koreny was the first to draw attention to the close resemblance between these three figures and the corresponding court figures in the suit of Pomegranates in a pack by a south German engraver (*oberdeutscher Stecher*) produced in the 1490s; see no. 30 in the Albertina catalogue. A reproduction of this pack was issued in 1977 jointly by Edition Leipzig and Heimeran Verlag of Munich, with a most informative booklet by Koreny. Four nearly complete copies exist, in the British Museum, in Weimar, Uppsala and Bologna, as well as other fragmentary ones. The pack is a Latin-suited one, in which Pomegranates replace the usual Coins; each suit has Ace, 2 to 9, Banner (with an index X), Maid, Cavalier and King; the numeral cards from Ace to 9 also have Roman numeral indices. The Swords are very slightly curved sabres, and the Batons are sticks of a very wavy form, both of them intersecting, often in a very unusual arrangement. All the numeral cards have fantastic vignettes, including figures of children on some of those of the Cups and Pomegranates suits; on the Ace of Batons, children are sawing the Baton in half, as in the Barcelona pack. On the basis of the links with both the Barcelona and Berlin cards, Koreny considers that this pack was made for export to Spain, and in this he is surely correct. (He mistakenly identifies the female court figures as Queens, ranking above the Cavaliers; but there is nothing regal about them, and they are standing, not sitting.) It was remarked in *Playing Cards of Various Ages and Countries Selected from the Collection of Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, vol II, London, 1893, p. 13, that the pack by the oberdeutscher Stecher is related to a sheet of eight copper-engraved cards, the 2 to 9 of Cups, made probably in the 1460s by the highly productive

Dutch or north German engraver known as the Bandrollenmeister and now in the British Museum. These again show small children playing about between the cups, and may be part of yet another pack intended for export to Spain; see the Albertina catalogue, no. 29.

Appendix 3: An allegedly Spanish pack

D. Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte*, plate 10a, shows four cards of a Latin-suited pack of which only Coins survive; they are of the fifteenth century, and there are seven altogether; they belong to the Rothschild Collection at the Louvre. Those shown by Hoffmann are the 5, the 6, a Banner 10 and the (seated) King. The King bears the inscription 'Lo re doro', and the 10 'Lo Dece doro'. Hoffmann firmly identifies them as Spanish, and in this he is followed by Fritz Koreny (*Das Kartenspiel des oberdeutschen Stechers*, handbook with reproduction pack, Leipzig and Munich, 1977, p. 28 and fig. 22); neither offers any reason. Sylvia Mann has, however, suggested that the cards are Italian. On either supposition, they would be unique among Spanish and Italian cards in having a Banner 10, whereas we know from the pack discussed in Appendix 2 that German cardmakers included Banner 10s in Latin-suited packs intended for export; though I am hardly qualified to judge, the style looks German to me. But, even if this is right, it does not settle the question whether they were meant for Italy or for Spain. It is possible that Hoffmann and Koreny opted for Spain because of the large central Coin on the 5, which is indeed a feature of Spanish more than of Italian cards, though it is found in the Bolognese Primiera pack. A better guide may be the language of the inscriptions. *Oro* is both Spanish and Italian; it is true that *Denari* is the more regular Italian name for the suit, but *Oro* is also in common use, especially in southern Italy and Sicily; moreover, the Italian word does not admit a plural, while the Spanish one is usually used in its plural form *Oros* when it refers to the playing-card suit. Again, while Italian normally contracts to *d'oro*, the ordinary Spanish form is *de oro*. As far as this goes, therefore, the word *doro* tells in favour of Italy. So does the word *re*, which is the ordinary Italian word for 'king', the Castilian and Catalan forms being *rey* and *rei* respectively. *Dece* is, however, unusual: the ordinary words for 'ten' are *dieci* (Italian), *diez* (Castilian) and *deu* (Catalan). The question is in what area we might find the undiphthongised form *dece*. Professor Douglas Gifford, of the University of St Andrews, has suggested two Spanish possibilities. One is a *lingua francà* used in the Levant by Jewish and Greek Christian traders; for this he refers to an article by L.P. Harvey, R.O. Jones, and Keith Whinnom, 'Lingua Franca in a Villancico by Encina', *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, vol. 41, 1967, pp. 572-9. This prints a short poem by Juan del Encina, written, for comic effect, in this *lingua franca*, in 1520. The form of the word for 'ten' in this poem is *dez*. However, the authors of the article remark (p. 573) that 'before the late nineteenth century writers recorded samples of pidgin', which is how they classify this *lingua franca*, 'almost invariably with comic intent'. It seems most unlikely that the maker of a rather fine and elaborate pack of playing cards would deliberately use a form of pidgin Spanish for their inscriptions; it can hardly have been made either with comic intent or for Levantine traders. Professor Gifford's other suggestion is Galician, for which, he says, *dece* and the form *lo* of the definite article would be very much in order; but he adds that one would not expect the form *oro* 'because of the inflected tonic vowel in the West' (which I understand as meaning that one would expect *ouro* as in Portuguese). The upshot seems to be that the language is probably not one used in Spain.

With this conclusion, Professor Gianfranco Folena, head of the Institute of Romance Philology at the University of Padua, fully concurs; it is, in his view, 'beyond doubt' that the language is Italian rather than Spanish. The forms *lo* and *dece* point, he says, to southern fifteenth-century *koiné*, as spoken, for instance, at Rome or Naples. No early playing cards known to have come from Naples, or from anywhere in southern Italy, have survived. However, we noted that playing cards were known in Sicily in the late fourteenth century; by at least 1422, they were not only being used, but made, there. Professor Antonino Giuffrida, of the Archivio di Stato in Palermo, has informed me that the Archivio possesses three fifteenth-century notarised documents, discovered by Professor Bresc, referring to playing cards. The earliest is a contract, dated 31 August 1422, whereby one Petrus de Matrona, aged 16, engages with Petrus de Florito of Palermo to print, collate, colour and sell playing cards (*ad stampandum nayppis, incollandum, colorandum et vendendum*) in return for his board and lodging and a third of the profits. Next is a statement of debt, dated 7 February 1455, for the price of two (wood) blocks for (printing) playing cards (*due forme di nayibis*). Finally, there is an inventory of 1484, listing playing cards (*carti di iocu*) and various items of equipment for printing them; it may be noted that the word for 'ten' in this document is *dechi*. Not only were cards made in Sicily; they were also exported there. The *Tractatus de Civitate Ulmensi*, written in 1484 by the Dominican Bro. Felix Faber, states that there were so many cardmakers in Ulm that they sent cards to Italy, Sicily and 'the remotest islands' (see *Fratris Felicis Fabri Tractatus de Civitate Ulmensi, de eius Origine, Ordine, Regimine, de Civibus eius et Statu*, ed. by Gustav Veesenmeyer, no. 186 in the *Bibliothek des litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart*, Tübingen, 1889, p. 146). Now it is unthinkable that playing cards should have been known in Sicily and in northern Italy, but not in Naples, although I know of no direct evidence to this effect. W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 75, indeed quotes from G.A. Summonte, *Storia della città e regno di Napoli*, part II, Naples, 1601, book III, pp. 267-8 (p. 267 is headed 'Libro Secondo' by a printer's error), a story concerning a statue of Our Lady of Mercy in the church of S. Eligio in Naples: a man who had lost a large amount of money playing cards struck the statue on the face, whereupon it miraculously shed blood; the culprit fled to his native Florence, where he was arrested for a murder he had not committed, and then confessed his act of sacrilege. It is, however, obscure to me why Schreiber gives 1414 as the date of this episode; no date is given by Summonte (the text is exactly the same in the third edition, Naples, 1748, vol. 3, book IV, p. 80). Summonte says that the story may be read on an old tablet to be found in the church, and it is possible that this gives the date, although Schreiber does not mention it; without further enquiry, we thus have no definite evidence that playing cards were known in Naples in the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, we may assume that they were; moreover, if cards were exported from Germany to Sicily, they were probably also exported from there to Naples. I am therefore inclined to believe that the Rothschild Collection cards were made in Germany for southern Italy, and perhaps, in view of their fine quality, for someone at the Neapolitan court. The large central Coin on the 5 is no objection; Naples was much subject to Spanish influence, having been conquered by Aragon in 1442 and ruled, as an independent Kingdom, by a branch of the Aragonese dynasty from 1458 until its conquest by Ferdinand II, so that a Spanish feature in a pack made for Naples would be unremarkable. In any case, the feature is not decisively Spanish; for instance, on the sheet I-1010 in the Cary Collection at Yale, the central Coin on the 5 is larger than the others, though nothing like as large as that on the Rothschild Collection card.

CHAPTER 3

Europe and Asia

The sudden widespread appearance of playing cards in Europe in the last quarter, or at most third, of the fourteenth century is explained by some as the result of an independent invention of them, somewhere in Europe, at that time. Even without considering any positive contrary evidence, we can recognise this hypothesis to be intrinsically unlikely. On the face of it, the structure of the regular European playing-card pack cries out for explanation: it is not the sort of thing that would occur to anyone out of the blue. There is a story of an Eton College Training Corps platoon, when ordered to number off, shouting out, 'One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, Knave, Queen, King': familiarity makes us apt to overlook the oddity of continuing a numerical sequence with three human figures. As H.J.R. Murray remarked, people do not invent games out of wholly unfamiliar materials: either they adapt the equipment of one game for use in a new one, or they use, or represent, some already existing set of objects not previously part of any game.[1] The structure of the regular European pack is too complex, and too unnatural, for it to have been invented outright in its developed form: no one can have sat down and thought, 'If we had fifty-two equal-sized pieces of paper, marked on one side with the following designs, then we could play all sorts of games with them.' One might hit on the *generic* idea of playing cards – playing cards in the sense in which Lexicon cards or Happy Families cards are playing cards – and use for them symbols of some familiar kind or representations of some familiar objects; or, having the generic idea, one might think of a new structure for the pack. But, as we have seen, the evidence suggests that the regular four-suited pack appeared quite suddenly in Europe in a fully developed form: the earliest European playing cards formed a pack essentially the same in composition as the four-suited 52-card pack that we know today. Later – as early as the fifteenth century[2] – packs of playing cards, in the generic sense, were devised with a totally different structure; but it seems certain that the first appearance in Europe of playing cards in the generic sense was in the form of the regular four-suited pack. There is not the slightest trace of any gradual development leading up to the invention of a pack with so complex and surprising a structure; and this fact, of itself, prompts the supposition that the pack was not invented in Europe, but introduced from elsewhere in an already developed form.

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[1] H.J.R. Murray, *The History of Board Games Other than Chess*, Oxford, 1952, pp. 7, 237.

[2] In 1449 a wealthy Venetian, Jacopo Antonio Marcello, sent as a present to Queen Isabelle, the first wife of King René I, Duke of Lorraine, a set of sixteen picture cards that had originally been painted by Michelino da Besozzo at the order of Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, who died in 1447. The set was divided into four groups of four cards each, representing Virtue, Virginity, Riches and Pleasure: each card depicted a suitable classical divinity. The pack has disappeared, but Marcello's covering letter has survived, giving a description of the pack and saying that it had been painted by Michelino (*Michelinum pictorem elegantissimum adhibuit, alterum hac nostra tempestate Polycletum, qui totum ludum artificiosissime ornatissimeque depingeret*: 'he commissioned the very fine painter Michelino, a second Polycletus of our time, to paint the whole pack most skilfully and beautifully'). The use of the word *ludus* shows, presumably, that this set was really intended to be used to play some kind of game. See P. Durrieu, 'Michelino da Besozzo', *Mémoires de l'Institut national de France, Académie des Inscriptions*, vol. 38, part 2, 1911, pp. 365-93, especially pp. 373 and 376; also the reports in the *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France pour 1895*, p. 117, and in *La Chronique des Arts*, 1895, p. 110; *Le Manuscrit*, vol. II, 1895, p. 18, has also a passing remark on the subject in the same author's 'Le Strabon du Roi René', pp. 2-5, 17-21, which concerns another present by Marcello to King René himself.

If, like the game of chess, the playing-card pack was an importation into Europe from outside, it is natural to ask from where it came. The question from which area European playing cards immediately derived inevitably leads on to the further question, which many writers have striven to answer, where playing cards originated in the first place; just as chess came into Europe from the Islamic world, but was originally an Indian invention, so it is quite possible that the region from which playing cards entered Europe was not that which gave them birth. But, in asking this further question, we must make just that distinction which does not arise for the introduction of playing cards into Europe. The *generic* idea of playing cards may well have antedated the invention of the regular form of pack, or of whatever approximation to it was the ancestor of the European playing-card pack: the question as to ‘the origin of playing cards’ may well have different answers according as we understand the term ‘playing cards’ in its broadest sense or only in that narrower sense in which it applies exclusively to cards of the regular pack.

Playing cards can be made of other materials than paper; but it is of paper that they are most conveniently and typically made, and, indeed, the very word ‘card’ (*charta*, etc.) means originally simply ‘paper’. Likewise, playing cards do not have to be printed, but can be drawn or painted by hand; but printing is obviously the most efficient means for producing them in any quantity. It is therefore natural to conjecture that the land in which both paper and printing were first invented – China – was also that in which playing cards, in the generic sense, were first known. This conjecture is borne out by the evidence. T.F. Carter gives A.D. 969 as the earliest certain date for Chinese playing cards: this is on the basis of an entry for that year in the *Liao shih* of T‘o-t‘o, a history of the Liao dynasty (907-1125) written in the fourteenth century, stating that the Emperor Mu-tsung played cards (*yeh ke hsi*) on the night of New Year’s Eve.[3] Dr Gernot Prunner has cited the *Kuei t‘ien lu*, a book of anecdotes written in the eleventh century by the historian Ou-yang Hsiu, as placing the invention of playing cards (*yeh tzŭ ko*) in the middle of the T‘ang dynasty (618-906), that is to say, about the time when the earliest books were printed, in the ninth century.[4] Ou-yang Hsiu’s opinion seems to be borne out by the title of a poem, mentioning playing cards (*yeh tzŭ*), by Li Tung, who lived at the very end of the T‘ang period, and by an entry on ‘golden *yeh tzŭ* games’, compiled by Lady Chou, consort of the last ruler of the Southern T‘ang dynasty (936-978), included in a catalogue in the *Tan ch‘ien tsung lu*.[5] We can therefore safely regard playing cards as having originated in China in the ninth century, a date which long precedes the earliest possible one at which there is any ground to think that they were known anywhere else in the world.

From a world perspective, the important step was the invention of playing cards as such; but, from a Chinese viewpoint, this is a superficial view. As is apparent from the preceding paragraph, the term used for playing cards in the older Chinese works is *yeh tzǔ*, as appears in the title of the mid-sixteenth-century treatise *Yeh tzǔ p'u* by P'an Chih-heng included in the *Shuo fu* compiled by the Ming writer T'ao Tsung-i. In modern Chinese, however, the word used is *p'ai.* This term is applied both to playing cards and to tiles, such as Ma Jong tiles and dominoes; when it is necessary to distinguish, the word *p'ai* is qualified by a word for the material (paper, ivory, etc.) of which the card or tile is made; thus *chih p'ai* (paper *p'ai*) means 'playing cards' in our restricted sense. This terminology reflects the fact that no distinction of principle is made between playing cards and tiles. As instruments of a game, both are alike in looking the same on one side and different on the other, so as to allow each player to hold pieces whose value is unknown to the other players; the game itself is unaffected by whether these pieces are thin and flexible or thick and rigid. It is apparent to anyone who has played Ma Jong that it is essentially a card game, bearing a general resemblance to Rummy; but it will reasonably be felt that there is a deeper difference between card games and the games usually played in the West with dominoes. In card games, it has no bearing on the play which way up a card is laid on the table; all that matters is *which* card is played by a given player at a given time. Thus, although it was a long time before double-headed cards were introduced in the West, it was precisely because the distinction between the top and the bottom of the card had no significance for the play that their introduction was a great advantage to players. Double-ended dominoes, on the other hand, would, for European players, be an impossibility; in the usual type of domino game played in the West, based on the principle of matching ends, it matters to the game not only where the domino is placed, but also which way round it is placed. Judged by this criterion, however, most Chinese domino games are to be classed as card games: although the principle of matching ends is not absolutely unknown in China,[6] in almost all Chinese domino games all that matters is the identity of the domino played at a given time, not where or which way round it is placed. The idea of double-ended dominoes, such that one can identify a particular domino as (say) the 4-3 without being able to associate the 4 with one end and the 3 with the other, is therefore not at all an absurdity in China. From the point of view of the games played with them, Chinese dominoes, like Ma Jong tiles, are to be classified as playing cards in the generic sense.

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[3] T.F. Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westwards*, New York, 1925, revised edition 1931, pp. 140-1; second edition, revised by Goodrich, New York, 1955, pp. 184-5; see also the 1925 and 1931 editions, p. 243, footnote 5, and the 1955 edition, p. 189, footnote 7. ‘Liao’ was the name of the Kitan dynasty whose empire lay to the north of the Sung, with its capital at Peking. For the passage from the *Liao shih*, see Karl A. Wittfogel and Feng Chia-Shêng, ‘History of Chinese Society: Liao (907-1125)’, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s., vol. 36, Philadelphia, 1949, p. 257. The reference to the *Liao shih* is given as chapter 7, p. 5a of the Po-na edition. T‘o-t‘o includes the term *yeh ke hsi* in his glossary.

[4] Gernot Prunner, *Ostasiatische Spielkarten*, Bielefeld, 1969, p. 4, a catalogue for an exhibition which contains many illustrations and much useful information.

[5] Both these are cited by Chin Hsüeh-shih in his *Mu chu hsien hua (Swineherd Games)* in the section on playing cards (*chih p‘ai*); the book is included in the *Chao-tai ts‘ung-shu* collection, Pieh-chi, chüan 43. Chin Hsüeh-shih flourished in the second half of the eighteenth century, and his book contains much valuable information. (The explanation of the title of the book is that T‘ao K‘an (257-332) had gamblers flogged and their gaming instruments thrown into the river, saying, ‘Such diversions are fit only for swineherds.’ Among the extremely learned, ‘swineherd games’ was therefore a general term for games of chance.) The full title of Li Tung’s poem is ‘Secretary Wei of Lung-chou played *yeh tzŭ* after dreaming of double sixes. I offer him this poem.’ It is in vol. 723 of the *Complete Poems of the T‘ang Dynasty*. Chin Hsüeh-shih cites Lady Chou’s entry as included in ‘Mr Cheng’s catalogue’ in the *Tan ch‘ien tsung lu*, a work compiled in the early sixteenth century. I owe much of this information to Dr David Hawkes, of All Souls College, Oxford, and am much indebted to him for the great trouble he took to help me with Chinese sources.

Ma Jong itself is frequently played in China, not with tiles, but with (paper) cards. Even more common are domino cards, which are now in fact always double-ended, bearing at each end the two spot-markings (e.g. 4-3) which together identify the domino, and sometimes also an additional design, irrelevant to play, for decorative purposes. Dominoes are a Chinese invention, which arrived in the West only very late, in the eighteenth century.[7] Each domino represents a possible fall of two dice; there is no blank in Chinese dominoes, the blank being a European addition. It is indeed certain that the early *yeh tzǔ* were either dominoes or domino cards, as is apparent from the title of Li Tung's poem, which mentions the double six, while Prunner cites the *Kuei t'ien lu* to the same effect. The question whether the earliest ones were domino tiles or domino cards is as unimportant from a Chinese viewpoint as the question from what material the earliest chessmen or chessboards were made, and without doubt the term *yeh tzǔ* was applied to both. But the question becomes important when we enquire into the possibility that the playing cards of other lands are ultimately derived from those of China. Since in his poem Li Tung speaks of 'square ivories engraved with colours', he appears to have tiles in mind, and Prunner believes that it was with tiles that Mu Tsung played. However, the erudite writer Yang Shen (1488-1559) said that the early *yeh tzǔ* were probably like the paper cards of his day,[8] and in this he is followed by later writers; and since *yeh* means a leaf or page of a book (*tzŭ*, literally ‘son’, being used vaguely for ‘piece’), Carter’s opinion that domino cards preceded domino tiles, the earliest ‘dominoes’ being made of stiff paper, and the more costly tile form coming into use only later, is highly plausible.[9]

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[6] See Stewart Culin, *Games of the Orient*, Rutland, Vermont, and Tokyo, 1958 (originally published as *Korean Games*, Philadelphia, 1895), p. 141.

[7] See p. 530 of S. Culin, 'Chinese games with dice and dominoes', *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution ... for the year ending June 30, 1893: Report of the U.S. National Museum*, Washington, 1895, pp. 489-537, and R.C. Bell, *Board and Table Games from Many Civilisations*, vol. I, Oxford, 1969, p. 162.

[8] Quoted by Chin Hsüeh-shih, op. cit. He actually says that they were probably like the *chih-p'ai chiu-ling*, i.e. 'drinking cards', that is, ones not designed for playing an actual game, but as an aid in a drinking party; but the important point is that he considered them to have been paper cards.

Whichever came first, it seems certain that, even if we insist on counting only paper cards, it was in China that playing cards, in the generic sense, were first invented. It does not follow that the idea was not hit on independently elsewhere at a later date; nor does this determine the origin of the regular pack divided into suits. There are three principal types of Chinese playing cards and tiles, of which domino cards and tiles are the earliest. The latest are the chess cards. These are packs in which each card bears a character denoting one of the Chinese chess pieces,[10] divided into either two or four equal sets – suits, in a loose sense – distinguished by colour. I know no definite evidence when packs of this kind were invented, but have no reason for supposing them to be earlier than the nineteenth century.[11]

The category of Chinese playing cards most closely resembling European ones is that consisting of the ‘money’ cards; this category also comprises Ma Jong cards and tiles. ‘Money’ packs have genuine suits, composed of numeral cards running from 1 to 9, each suit representing monetary values. There are two sub-categories, each comprising several forms: those with four suits, and those with three. In the *Mu chu hsien hua*, a book on games by the eighteenth-century writer Chin Hsüeh-shih, the term *chih pʻai* is reserved for the three-suited packs, while the four-suited ones are called *ma tiao pʻai*; this terminology is no longer current. Chin cites various earlier works, including the sixteenth-century *Yeh tzŭ pʻu*, as referring to *ma tiao pʻai*, while Prunner, who illustrates two seventeenth-century four-suited packs in his catalogue, mentions other such sources.[12] A game played with the three-suited pack is said by Chin to have been very popular among gentlemen of the scholar class at the end of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644); and he himself expresses the view that the pack must have been formed from the four-suited one by omitting one of the suits at that period, that is to say, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. This appears a very probable opinion. Chin remarks that, in his day, the *chih pʻai* (three-suited packs) are found everywhere, and are about ten times as popular as the *ma tiao pʻai*. The disparity is even greater to-day; but the four-suited pack still survives in a version known as *liu hu pʻai* (*luk foo pai*, six tigers cards) popular among Hakka-speaking people, and in a quite different Vietnamese version; the former is easily obtainable in London.

The four suits vary somewhat in name, but typically consist of Cash, Strings (of cash), Myriads (of strings) and Tens (of myriads). In three-suited packs, only the first three of these are present. The four-suited packs always contain just one card of each kind, whereas the three-suited ones almost always have either two or four cards of each denomination; this was already so when Chin was writing. Chin describes a *ma tiao* pack as consisting of 40 cards. Each suit contains cards from 1 to 9, save that 1 is missing from the Tens suit; in addition, the Tens suit has three cards higher than the 9, namely, in ascending order, the Hundred Myriads, the Thousand Myriads and the Myriad Myriads, while the Cash suit has two extra ones, the *Chih-hua* (Flower) and the *Kʻung tʻang*. In the *Yeh tzŭ pʻu* of Pʻan Chih-heng, these last two cards are given as *Pan wen chʻien* (‘Half a Cash’) and

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[9] T.F. Carter, op. cit. 1925 and 1931 editions, p. 140, 1955 edition, p. 184.

[10] Chinese chess differs considerably from European chess, both being descended, by a different line, from the ancestral Indian game. Each player has a General (corresponding to our King), two Captains (historically equivalent to the Queen), two Elephants or Ministers (equivalent to the Bishops), two Horses (corresponding to our Knights), two Chariots (corresponding to our Rooks), five Soldiers (corresponding to our Pawns) and two Cannons, to which nothing on the European board corresponds. Chinese chess pieces are white discs, similar in shape to draughtsmen, on each of which is inscribed the character denoting its rank, in black or green for one player and red for the other.

[11] Chess packs are almost always in the form of paper cards, but there is a set of rectangular tiles at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York.

[12] Chin says that the *Shu chʻien yeh pʻu* of the sixteenth-century writer Wang Tao-kʻun is still in circulation, and deals with drinking cards (*chih-pʻai chiu-ling*), but that the *chih-pʻai* of this work are in fact *ma tiao pʻai*. He also mentions the *Yün chang ching* of Li Sui-chʻiu and the *Ma tiao chiao li* of Lung Tzŭ-yu, both in the *Shuo fu* collection. He mentions two lost works, *Ta ma ke chü* and *Ta ma ke shih*, but says that on the evidence of the *Chʻao ching ta ma ke* of the late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century writer Wen Hsiang-feng, also in the *Shuo fu*, the game of *ta ma* was not played with *ma tiao pʻai*. Prunner, op. cit., p. 8, mentions the fifteenth-century work *Shu yüan tsa chi* by Li Jung and the *Chü yi lu* of Wang Shih-chen (1634-1711) as both describing the four-suited pack in detail. The seventeenth-century packs are nos. I and II of the catalogue.

K'ung mei wen respectively. These descriptions and names tally closely with the seventeenth-century cards illustrated by Prunner. P'an also observes that in the Cash suit the ordinary numeral cards run from 1 as highest down to 9 as lowest; W.H. Wilkinson, writing in 1895, confirms this for the case when the game is played by four people.[13] In more recent packs, the extra cards, variously named, have been reduced to three, making a pack of 38 cards altogether. The three-suited packs appear from the start to have had just three denominations of card, again variously named, in addition to the nine numeral cards of each of the three suits, so that there are 60 cards in a double pack and 120 in a quadruple one. In most games played with these cards, the three extra cards are not associated with particular suits. The Ma Jong set itself is simply a variant of the quadruple three-suited money pack in tile form. The suit known in English as 'Circles' represents the Cash suit (and is called in Chinese by a name meaning, in effect, 'coppers', as this used to be used in English for 'pennies'); the suit known, quite reasonably from the appearance of its suit-sign, as 'Bamboos' represents the Strings suit, and is so called in Chinese; and the suit vaguely called 'Characters' is the Myriads suit, each tile bearing a numeral from 1 to 9 and the character for 'myriad'. The four Winds, or simply directions, in the Ma Jong set are, like the Flowers and Seasons, an addition, peculiar to Ma Jong; the three Honour tiles, usually known in English, but not in Chinese, as 'Dragons', correspond to, though they do not precisely reproduce, the three extra cards which in the three-suited money pack do not belong to any of the suits. An immense antiquity is sometimes claimed for Ma Jong. In fact, it goes back only to about 1870, although the general type of game which it represents, and the money packs of which the Ma Jong set is a variant, are far older.

The Chinese money packs come close to falling under our definition of a 'regular' pack, but fail to fit it exactly for two reasons. First, there is no division into numeral cards and court cards, in the proper sense. In the four-suited pack, the extra cards do belong to particular suits, but they are not shared equally between all the suits and do not share ranks common to the suits to which they do belong; rather, they appear to have originated as continuations of the numeral series in those two suits. In the three-suited packs, the extra cards do not belong to the suits, but yet are not interchangeable with one another, like the Jokers of a modern European pack. Secondly, not all the suits have suit-signs. In the three-suited packs, except the Vietnamese version, the two lower suits, Cash and Strings, do have suit-signs: the identity of each numeral card is determined, in the way familiar to us, by the number of repetitions of a representation, usually highly conventionalised, either of a coin (the copper 'cash' with a hole in it) or of a string of cash. But, in the suit of Myriads, there is no suit-sign in the proper sense: rather, each card has written on it its number and the name of the suit, e.g. '4 Myriads'. Exactly this happens on the Ma Jong tiles. The same is true of most older surviving examples of the four-suited pack: the numeral cards of Cash and Strings are pip cards, with genuine suit-signs, but those of Myriads and Tens merely have their denominations inscribed on them. The two modern versions, Hakka and Vietnamese, of the four-suited pack have no suit-signs at all: every card has its denomination printed on it, in highly distorted characters. Save for the distortion of the characters, the same holds good of the seventeenth-century cards illustrated by Prunner.

Despite this difference, it is tempting to conjecture that the four-suited Chinese money pack is the ancestor of the four-suited regular pack that appeared in Europe in the later fourteenth century; both Wilkinson and Carter have contended for precisely this theory.[14] It is, however, quite evident that it could not have been the *immediate* forerunner of the European pack, as Wilkinson supposed. It is no great problem that the Chinese suits contain nine numeral cards, whereas the original number in the European pack was ten: but the absence of court cards from the Chinese suits forces us, on this hypothesis, to assume some considerable development between the Chinese prototype and the playing-card pack as first introduced into Europe. A further difficulty concerns the suit-signs. It is easy to imagine the Cash suit as the original of the Latin Coins suit, and the Strings suit could, by a misunderstanding, very well have been the original of the Batons suit. But the Myriads and Tens suits would not be intelligible to Europeans of the late Middle Ages: they would not even be recognisable as suits to people who could read neither the suit-names nor the numerals. Particularly is this so because, in almost all money packs, whether three or four-suited, the greater part of each numeral card in the Myriads suit and (when present) in the Tens suit is occupied by a human face or figure, representing one of the characters in the famous romance *Shui hu chuan* ('The Story of the Water Margin'). These figures are no longer to be found in the Hakka and Vietnamese four-suited packs, and they have been dropped from Ma Jong tiles and cards; but they are always present in the Myriads suit of three-suited packs, save for the Vietnamese one and, of course, Ma Jong packs, and they were formerly present in four-suited packs as well. In one of Prunner's seventeenth-century packs, figures from the *Shui hu chuan* appear on *all* the cards; in the other, which is unusual in its composition also (each suit has a 10 and the Tens suit has a 1), there is a figure on each card, representing, exceptionally, not a character from the *Shui hu chuan*, but some historical character from ancient times. The literary sources, however, consistently state that the cards of Myriads and Tens are illustrated with depictions of Sung Chiang and the other characters of the *Shui hu chuan*, and this association seems so firm that it is likely to have been a feature of the money packs from their first invention. Now, although these figures are purely decorative, and have no relation to the use of the cards, it would be natural for a foreigner, seeing the cards for the first time, to take them to be their principal feature. This would, of course, lead to a complete misinterpretation of the Myriads and Tens suits; and this fact constitutes an insuperable obstacle to the theory that European playing cards were developed directly out of Chinese ones.

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[13] W.H. Wilkinson, 'The Chinese origin of playing cards', *The American Anthropologist*, vol. VIII, pp. 61-78.

[14] W.H. Wilkinson, op. cit., and T.F. Carter, op. cit., 1925 and 1931 editions, pp. 139-44, with notes on pp. 241-6, and 1955 edition, pp. 183-8, with notes on pp. 188-92.

We must therefore dismiss the speculation that Marco Polo or some other of the Europeans who visited China returned with some examples of Chinese money cards, which later gave rise to European playing cards. Had this been so, there would have been a transitional period during which the Chinese prototype evolved into the 52-card pack as described by John of Rheinfelden. Of any such transitional period, not the slightest trace remains: the theory is to be rejected on essentially the same ground as that on which we have set aside the hypothesis that playing cards were independently invented in Europe.

The Chinese money pack cannot have been the immediate progenitor of the European pack; but that does not rule out its having been its remote ancestor, through various intervening intermediate forms. Whether this is a real possibility depends upon the antiquity of the money cards. A single Chinese playing card was found in 1905 by von Le Coq at Turfan. He tentatively dated it to the eleventh century. It shows a human figure, which strongly resembles that which depicts Wang Ying, one of the *Shui hu chuan* characters, and appears, in a number of money packs, on one of the three extra cards, inscribed simply 'Wang Ying'. The Turfan card has an inscription at the top, in a tilted rectangle, which, unfortunately, is hard to read, at least in the illustrations, because it is overprinted by a seal. If it does represent Wang Ying, the card cannot possibly be as early as the eleventh century; Carter assigned it to the fourteenth.[15] Both the sixteenth-century *Yeh tzŭ pʻu* and, according to Prunner, the fifteenth-century *Shu yüan tsa chi* of Li Jung describe the lower two suits as having suit-signs and the upper two as showing *Shui hu chuan* figures; if we assume that the association with these figures was a feature of the pack from its first invention, then this association sets a bound on its antiquity. The *Shui hu chuan* is the outcome of numerous legendary accretions that have attached to a historical nucleus, the exploits of a Robin Hood-like band of robbers in the early years of the twelfth century. The version that is now read dates from the seventeenth century, but has been expanded from earlier versions, the first of which, the *Hsüan-ho i-shih*, dates from the early Yüan (Mongol) dynasty; plays based on the story were performed at the same period, and portraits of and poems about 'Sung Chiang and his Thirty-six' dating from the later Southern Sung period

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[15] T.F. Carter, op. cit., 1925 and 1931 editions, plate opposite p. 142, and 1955 edition, plate opposite p. 184. Carter states that there were *two* Chinese playing cards found at Turfan, but I do not know any confirmation of this; I have also been told that there is an early Chinese playing card in a museum in Bombay, but do not know if this is true. The Turfan card is also illustrated in C.P. Hargrave, *A History of Playing Cards*, New York, 1930, 1966, p. 7, and in A. Bernhardi, 'Vier Könige', *Baessler-Archiv*, vol. XXIX, 1936, pp, 148-80, plate 9a. Bernhardi gives it as his opinion (p. 164) that the card is to be dated to about 1400.

(1127-1279) are well attested.[16] Given our hypothesis that the association with the *Shui hu chuan* characters is an original feature of the money pack, that pack can in no case be earlier than the twelfth century, and can hardly be later than the fourteenth: its most probable date of origin lies in the late Southern Sung, that is, in the thirteenth century.

That would leave just enough time for the money cards to have spread westwards from China, undergoing very considerable transformation in the process, and to have arrived in Europe about a century after their invention. But the schedule is extremely tight, and the thesis is therefore somewhat strained. We shall do better, at this stage, to try to trace the connection, if any, in the other direction, by reverting to our original question, from which area the European playing-card pack was immediately derived.

If playing cards arrived in Europe from some external source in about 1370, they can only have come from somewhere in the Islamic world; Europe, at that date, had no contact with any other part of the world save for those mediated by Islam. For a long time, many scholars dismissed this hypothesis on the ground that there was no evidence that playing cards were known in mediaeval Islam; hence the attraction of theories such as that of the direct transmission of playing cards from China to Europe by the agency of Marco Polo. In 1939, however, L.A. Mayer reported the existence in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum at Istanbul of a fifteenth-century hand-painted pack of cards from Mamlūk Egypt.[17] Mayer's own analysis of the pack was faulty, but, when this is corrected, it proves to be an almost complete pack originally containing 52 cards (of which 48 survive), consisting of four suits, Swords, Polo-Sticks, Cups and Coins, each composed of ten numeral cards and three court cards headed by the King.[18] Five of the surviving cards have been borrowed from another pack (or perhaps from two others), to replace lost cards; Mayer thought that these five secondary cards had been specially painted for that purpose, but, if that were so, the artist would surely have tried, if not to imitate the general style, at least to make the shapes of the suit-signs conform to those of the original pack, which, particularly in the Swords suit, they do not. The numeral cards are pip cards in the sense of showing the number of suit-signs corresponding to their values. The Swords and Polo-Sticks are very highly stylised, and their arrangement is similar to that of the Italian Swords and Batons. In detail, the Polo-Sticks intersect, forming, on the cards from 4 to 10, a kind of trellis pattern. On the 4 to 10 of this suit, most of the shafts of the Polo-Sticks form an obtuse angle with the heads, but the sides are otherwise straight; but on all the odd-numbered cards of the suit the odd Polo-Stick is S-shaped, as are two of them on the 10, and on all cards of the suit besides the 4 to 10 every Polo-Stick has a curved head; except on the two cards of the suit which come from the secondary pack, all curved heads end in a dragon's head shape. The two cards of the Swords suit (the 9 and 10) from the secondary pack show crescent-shaped swords, intersecting only once on the 9 but twice, in the Italian fashion, on the 10 (on the 9 one sword is straight). In the main pack, however, the Swords are S-shaped, and are arranged side by side, extending for most of the length of the card, but without intersecting; in this they resemble the exceptional version of the Swords suit mentioned in the last chapter as found in a few fifteenth-century Italian packs. On some of the odd-numbered cards of the Swords suit in the Istanbul pack, the odd sword is S-shaped, and on others it is straight.

What most strikingly differentiates this Mamlūk pack from European ones is that the court cards show no human figures. Instead, they bear the appropriate suit-sign and, at the bottom, an inscription giving the rank and suit. The three ranks are: King (*malik*); Viceroy (*nā'ib malik*); and Second Viceroy (*thānī nā'ib*). There are also inscriptions in verse at the tops of all the court cards and of the 8, 9 and 10 of Swords, the Ace, 2 and 3 of Polo-Sticks and the 2 and 3 of Coins (the Ace of Coins is missing); the verses on the secondary cards are in a different metre – another indication that these cards were taken from one or more distinct packs, rather than being especially made as replacements. Closer examination reveals, however, that, while the lower inscriptions on the secondary cards were there from the start, and while all those cards with upper inscriptions always had such inscriptions (though not originally those that they have now), the lower inscriptions were not part of any of the court cards of the primary pack when they were first painted. This means that, when the primary pack was originally produced, the court cards must have been distinguished solely by their designs. This is plain in the case of the Kings, which all bear a prominent square pattern below the suit-sign. It is only in the Cups suit that the Viceroy and Second Viceroy bear anything that could have served as such an identifying emblem; but it is probably only in this suit that the original two lower court cards remain. In Coins and Polo-Sticks what was originally the Ace, and in Swords what was originally the 9, have been turned into Viceroys by the addition of a lower inscription, presumably when the original Viceroys were lost; the reason for choosing the 9 of Swords to make into a Viceroy must have been that it had an upper inscription, while none of the low-numbered cards of that suit does. The Second Viceroy in both Coins and Polo-Sticks is from the secondary pack, while in Swords it is missing altogether. The secondary cards were evidently taken from a pack or packs made at a time when the practice of identifying the court cards by means of special emblems had been abandoned in favour of doing so by means of inscriptions; when these cards had to be added in order to reconstitute the primary pack, such inscriptions were painted on to all the court cards, making it possible to convert numeral cards lacking the original emblems into court cards.[19]

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[16] See Richard Gregg Irwin, *The Evolution of a Chinese Novel*, Cambridge, Mass., 1953, p. 14 and p. 20, fn. 40, and P. Eugen Feifel, *Geschichte der chinesischen Literatur*, Darmstadt, 1959, pp. 291 ff.

[17] L.A. Mayer, 'Mamluk playing cards', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*, vol. XXXVIII, 1939, pp. 113-18, posthumously reprinted in L.A. Mayer, *Mamluk Playing Cards*, ed. R. Ettinghausen and O. Kurz, Leiden, 1971.

[18] For a detailed discussion, see M. Dummett and K. Abu-Deeb,. 'Some remarks on Mamluk playing cards', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. XXXVI, 1973, pp. 106-28.

A curious and so far unexplained feature is the name of the Cups suit – *ṭūmān*, which does not mean 'cups'. Some have suggested that this be taken as the Turkish word for 'trousers', since, oddly, a pair of short trousers was a frequently used emblem in Mamlūk heraldry. A more attractive possibility is that it is the Persian word, deriving from Mongol or Turkish, for '10,000', applied particularly to a military unit or a group of villages; if so, there would be a tantalising coincidence in meaning with the name of the Chinese Myriads suit. However, neither explanation accounts for the fact that the suit-sign is unmistakably a cup; and the second suggestion conflicts with the fact that the word is normally written *tūmān* in Arabic (the Arabic letters transliterated respectively t and t being completely distinct), although there is a passage in ibn Baṭṭūṭa where it appears as *ṭūmān*.[20] For the present, the name of this suit remains a mystery.

The Istanbul set makes it certain that there existed in Mamlūk Egypt playing cards closely resembling contemporary Italian ones, and that different types of design, and different modes of representation of the court cards, were in use there. Since the cards date from a period later than the first introduction of playing cards into Europe, this does not, of itself, tell us whether the Mamlūk cards were derived from Italian ones or the Italian cards from the Mamlūk ones, and some scholars, such as Pinder and Hoffmann, have espoused the former hypothesis.[21] What it does do is to alter the balance of probabilities by removing an obstacle to what is intrinsically most likely. We have seen that, given the abrupt appearance in Europe of the playing-card pack in its fully developed form, it is highly unlikely that it was invented in Europe, and highly probable that it was introduced from elsewhere; and, if so, it is hard to suppose that it came from anywhere but the Islamic world, since Europe had at that time no direct contact with either India or China. Until Mayer's discovery, the apparent non-existence of any mediaeval Islamic playing cards seemed to some scholars an insuperable obstacle, and so they either fell back on the hypothesis of an independent European invention, or devised ingenious but unconvincing acccounts of how they might have reached Europe from India or from China without passing through the intervening belt of Muslim states that encircled Europe. Once we know that playing cards were known in at least one part of the Islamic world, the objection is removed; there is no longer any reason to resist the intrinsically most probable hypothesis, that it was from one or another part of the Islamic world that playing cards first arrived in Europe.

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[19] See M. Dummett and K. Abu-Deeb, op. cit.

[20] See Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, vol. II, 1963, p. 638, where the passage is cited from H. von Mzik, *Die Reise des Arabers Ibn Baṭūṭa durch Indien und China*, Hamburg, 1911, p. 442.

[21] Eberhard Pinder, *Charta Lusonia*, Biberach an der Riss, 1961, p. 14; Detlef Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte: eine Kulturgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1972, p. 19.

The cards in the Topkapı Sarayı are not the only evidence for Islamic playing cards that we have. No other pack has been discovered, but several individual cards, or, rather, fragments of cards, have been found.[22] If the earliest European cards were imitations of Islamic ones, it seems probable that the Islamic packs which first found their way to Europe had actual figures on the court cards. Even without this hypothesis, it is a reasonable conjecture that there may have been Islamic packs of this type: we know from the Istanbul set that two distinct non-representational methods of presenting the court cards were in use, and, in secular Islamic art, there was far from being a strict adherence to the injunction not to represent the human form. The late Dr Ettinghausen indeed identified one fragmentary drawing as a King of some undetermined suit, and another as a design for a mounted Viceroy.[23] These identifications remain, however, subject to serious doubt; all the fragments so far identified with any certainty as mediaeval Islamic playing cards are numeral cards. One of these has been dated, on stylistic grounds, to the twelfth century by Ettinghausen and to the thirteenth by Grube. In respect of the individual card, both datings may be too early, despite the unquestioned expertise of these two authorities. Designs used for playing cards are notoriously conservative; stylistic features may be preserved unchanged for centuries. For this reason, while one may often safely say that a card could not have been made before a certain date, it is much more risky to assert, on purely stylistic grounds, that it could not have been made after a particular date; all the more so when, as here, one is dealing with an isolated fragment, constituting one quarter of a card, of a type of which we have very few examples. But a doubt, on these grounds, about the dating of the individual card leaves unaffected the argument to the early date of the type which it exemplifies: if Grube and Ettinghausen are right in thinking the design to have originated no later than the thirteenth century, then Islamic playing cards already existed at that time, and we can conclude without more ado that European cards were derived from Islamic ones and not conversely.

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[22] There are five other fragments of which descriptions have been published and which have been definitely identified as parts of Islamic playing cards (or at least of designs for cards). The first four of these are all in the private collection of Dr Edmund de Unger, and the fifth is in the Benaki Museum at Athens (catalogue no. 9b).

(i) One illustrated in L.A. Mayer, op. cit., 1971, figs. 56 and 57, and in B.W. Robinson (ed.), *Islamic Painting and the Arts of the Book*, London, 1976, plate 8. Ettinghausen, in L.A. Mayer, 1971, pp. 9-10, identifies it as the right-hand half of a 4 of Cups, but, if so, its arrangement of the cups in a single row would differ from the arrangement in two rows on the corresponding Istanbul card, and the shape of the card would also diverge greatly from the Istanbul ones, which measure approx. 252 x 95 mm., while this fragment is 119 x 40 mm.; it is therefore much more likely to be the top right-hand quarter of an 8 of Cups. Ettinghausen considers the card to be late Fatimid in date, i.e. twelfth century, but allows that it may come from Ayyubid (1174-1258) or even early Mamlūk times; in any case, it is no later than the thirteenth century. E.J. Grube, in 'Fostat fragments' in B.W. Robinson (ed.), op. cit., pp. 57-8, who also believes it to be part of a 4 of Cups, thinks that it is Ayyubid or early Mamlūk, probably about mid-thirteenth century and in any case no earlier than 1200. The catalogue number is I-27.

(ii) A second is illustrated in B.W. Robinson, op. cit., plate 8, and in R. Ettinghausen, 'Further comments on Mamluk playing cards' in *Gatherings in Honour of Dorothy E. Miner*, ed. U.E. McCracken, L.M.C. Randall and R.H. Randall, Jr., Baltimore, 1974, pp. 51-78, fig. 22; it measures 120 x 85 mm. It is part of another card of the Cups suit, probably the Ace. Grube considers it to be of the same date as (i). Its catalogue no. is I-28.

(iii) A fragment, measuring 100 x 91 mm., of a card of the Swords suit, perhaps the 2, has not been illustrated; see B.W. Robinson (ed.), op. cit., p. 65 (catalogue no. I-51).

(iv) A fourth fragment, measuring 140 x 95 mm., has also not been illustrated,.and is part of a card of the Coins suit, perhaps the 4; see B.W. Robinson, op. cit., catalogue no. I-52.

(v) Yet another fragment of a card of the Cups suit, probably the 5 or 6, is illustrated in M. Dummett, 'A note on some fragments in the Benaki Museum', *Art and Archaeology Research Papers*, no. 4, December 1973, pp. 93-9, fig. 1. It measures approx. 87 x 35 mm.

A further fragment in the Benaki Museum is probably not a playing card: if it is, it must be from a card of the Coins suit. It measures approx. 75 x 40 mm., and has the catalogue no. 9c. See M. Dummett, op. cit.

[23] See the article by R. Ettinghausen cited under (ii) of the foregoing footnote, pp. 70-3 and figs. 29, 33. The drawing of a mounted falconer shown in fig. 33 belongs to the de Unger collection (catalogue no. 1-31), and is also illustrated in B.W. Robinson (ed.), op. cit., plate 9. Especially in view of Grube's remark in that volume that it is not the work of an artist, its claims to be regarded as a sketch for a playing card may be rated as negligible. Fig. 29 shows a fragment from the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (catalogue no. 15610/4-1). It indeed depicts a seated King, and it is not difficult to see it as a playing card. Both the King's hands are visible, and one holds what Ettinghausen interprets as a bird, though to me it more resembles a snake. Ettinghausen implausibly connects this with the Birds suit occasionally used in Germany in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; until we have definite reason for identifying what the King is holding as a suit-sign (perhaps some new deformation of the Polo-Stick), we cannot safely class this fragment as a playing card.

In addition to the mediaeval Egyptian playing cards that have been found, one fifteenth-century Italian card and two sixteenth-century ones have been discovered amongst mediaeval fragments from Egypt, indicating that there was a trade in playing cards with Italy that extended even into Ottoman times (Mamlūk Egypt fell to the Ottoman Selim the Grim in 1517).[24] That this trade was not in one direction only is attested by several European references. In the inventory of the goods of Louis de Valois and his wife Valentine, née Visconti, Duke and Duchess of Orleans, begun at the order of their son Charles on the day of his mother's death in 1408, there are listed *ung jeu de quartes sarrasines* and *unes quartes de Lombardie* ('one pack of Saracen cards; one cards of Lombardy').[25] F.M. Graves concluded that the former was a regular Italian pack and the latter a Tarot pack;[26] but since the Tarot pack had almost certainly not been invented by 1408, let alone by 1389, when Louis and Valentine were married, and when she very likely brought the cards with her from Milan, there is no reason not to take this entry as meaning exactly what it says. A number of fifteenth-century inventories from Barcelona also mention Islamic cards. Two distinct ones, both dated 1414, have entries 'j *joch de nayps moreschs*' and 'j *joch de nahyps moreschs*' respectively ('one pack of Moorish playing cards'); a third, of 1439, has the entry 'x *jochs de naips moreschs*; iij *altres jochs de naips plans petits*' ('10 packs of Moorish playing cards; 3 other packs of ordinary small playing cards').[27] Yet another, of 1460, has the entry '*jochs de nayps plans, y altres jochs moreschs*' ('packs of ordinary playing cards, and other, Moorish, packs').[28] The Mamlūk cards at Istanbul were not an isolated rarity, as some have supposed; in the fifteenth century, Islamic playing cards were perfectly well known, even in Europe.

So far, three references to playing cards are known from mediaeval Arabic literature. One is from the *Thousand and One Nights*,[29] despite the frequent assertions to the contrary in modern writings on playing cards. Another is from the sixteenth-century writer Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī (1504-1567).[30] The most important is a passage in the *Annals* of Ibn Taghrī-Birdī (a history of the Mamluk rulers from 1382 to 1469) to which attention was first drawn by Mme Laila Serageddin.[31] In this, the future Sultan al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad is recorded to have won a large sum of money in a game of cards in about the year 1400 (the date is not precisely given). This confirms that playing cards were known in Mamlūk Egypt at a date not long after their first appearance in Europe. But by far the most celebrated reference to mediaeval Islamic cards comes once more from Europe, namely from the Chronicles of Viterbo. There are three fifteenth-century Chronicles of that city, all surviving in manuscript form. Two of them – those by Fra Francesco d'Andrea da Viterbo and by Niccolò di Niccola della Tuccia – have been published;[32] the third, by Giovanni di Juzzo di Covelluzzo, has not, but the relevant passage from it is cited in F. Bussi's *Istoria della Città di Viterbo* of 1742. (Writers on playing cards often give a confused account of this matter, referring to 'the' Chronicle of Viterbo, as if there were only one.) All three chroniclers state that they are relying, for their pre-fifteenth-century narratives, on earlier Chronicles, and, in particular, for the fourteenth century, on one by Cola di Covelluzzo (a relative of Juzzo's); Fra Francesco and della Tuccia also cite another fourteenth-century one by Maestro Geronimo. These earlier Chronicles have disappeared: but since all three of the fifteenth-century ones contain slightly garbled versions of what is evidently the same entry for the year 1379, it is apparent that they must all be quoting, directly or indirectly, from the same fourteenth-century source, almost certainly the lost Chronicle of Cola di Covelluzzo. When reconstructed by comparison of the entries in the three Chronicles, the original statement can be seen to have read, '*Anno* 1379. *Fu recato in Viterbo il gioco delle carte, che in Saracino parlare si chiama Nayb*' ('In the year 1379 there was brought to Viterbo the game of cards, which in the Saracen language is called *nayb*'). Juzzo has expanded the last clause to '*che venne de Seracinia, & chiamasi tra loro Naib*' ('which comes from the land of the Saracens, and is called among them *naib*'): this remark cannot be credited with fourteenth-century authority, but at least shows how Juzzo (who died in 1480) interpreted his source. (Although one late MS. of della Tuccia's Chronicle substitutes for the remark about the 'Saracen' language the information that cards were brought to Viterbo by a Saracen named Hayl (*da un saracino chiamato Hayl*), this is almost certainly a copyist's blunder.) Thus the entry in the original fourteenth-century Chronicle does not seem to have explicitly stated that playing cards came from the Islamic world; but it did, in the very year of their arrival in Viterbo, and only two years after the very earliest reference to them from anywhere in Europe, connect them with the Islamic world, and show an awareness of their existence there. If playing cards had in fact been invented in Europe only a few years before, it is unlikely that they would yet have been taken up by the Muslims, or that an Italian chronicler would have been aware of the fact if they had.[33]

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[24] The fifteenth-century card is a 3 of Cups in the Benaki Museum (catalogue no. 9a) from the same pack, probably Venetian, as sheets I-1009 and I-1010 in the Cary Collection at Yale University; see the article by M. Dummett cited under (v) of footnote 22. Of the sixteenth-century ones, one belongs to Dr Ettinghausen, and is illustrated (figs. 23 and 24) in his article mentioned under (ii) of footnote 22; it is part of an 8 of Batons. The other is a 6 of Swords in the collection of Mr Sa'd Khadam of Cairo, and is referred to by Ettinghausen (p. 65).

[25] F.M. Graves, *Deux inventaires de la Maison d'Orléans*, Paris, 1926, p. 49.

[26] F.M. Graves, op. cit., p. 134.

[27] See 'El Joc de naibs a Catalunya', unsigned, *Bibliofilia*, ed. R. Miquel y Planas, vol. II, Barcelona, 1915-20, columns 181-207; also José Maria Madurell Marimón, 'Notas Documentales de Naiperos Barceloneses', *Documentos y Estudios*, vol. IV, Instituto Muncipal de Historia, Barcelona, 1961, p. 59.

[28] J. Brunet y Bellet, *Lo joch de Naibs, Naips ó Cartas*, Barcelona, 1886, pp. 80, 111, 113 and 160. A possible, though less likely rendering of this entry is 'packs of ordinary playing cards and other Moorish games'.

[29] See Enno Littmann (trans.), *Die Erzählungen aus den Tausendundein Nächten*, vol. III, Wiesbaden, 1953, p. 693. The reference occurs in the story of the clever slave girl Tawaddud, 460th-461st nights; Littmann's translation is from the text edited by Sir William Hay Macnaghten from an Egyptian manuscript 'brought to India by the late Major Turner, editor of the Shah-Nameh', and published by him as *Alif Laila, or Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night*, four vols., Calcutta, 1839-42, our passage being in vol. II, p 354.

[30] This reference is given in Franz Rosenthal, *Gambling in Islam*, Leiden, 1975, p. 37, fn. 146, p. 44, fn. 178, p. 45, fn. 180, and p. 63, as *az-Zawājir ('an iqtirāf al-kabā'ir)*, vol. II, Cairo, 1951, p. 191. The reference to the *Thousand and One Nights* is also due to Rosenthal. My thanks are due to Dr Rudi von Leyden for bringing Rosenthal's book to my attention.

[31] For an English translation, see Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *History of Egypt 1382-1469 A.D.*, trans. by W. Popper, *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology*, no. 17, Berkeley and Los Angeles, part III, 1957, p. 50. An acknowledgment to Mme Serageddin was made by Dr Ettinghausen in his article cited under (ii) of footnote 22, p. 74. For comments on this article, see the review by M. Dummett and Kamal Abu-Deeb in the *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. III, no. 3, February 1975, pp. 43-52.

The Viterbo reference is of great etymological interest. In most European languages, the word for 'card' is, as in English, a derivative of Latin *charta*, meaning 'paper', or of its diminutive *chartula*. In fifteenth-century Italian, however, we very often find, alongside *cartule*, *carticelle*, etc., the quite different word *naibi* used for 'playing cards', although after that century the word went out of use; and from Marseilles and from Spain we find forms like *nahipi* and *naips*, the ordinary Spanish word for 'playing cards' being *naipes* to this day. The entry in the Viterbo Chronicles supplies the only plausible etymology for these words that has ever been proposed. It is very unlikely that playing cards in general were ever called in Arabic anything like *nā'ib*, the plural of which is in any case *nuwwāb*; but, since this word, meaning 'deputy', is the first word of the title of the second court card in the Mamlūk pack, it is perfectly possible that, if Italians or Spaniards first became acquainted with playing cards of Muslim origin, they would apply the word to playing cards as such. It is much less likely that they should have done so had playing cards been a European invention, subsequently adopted by the Muslims. The use of the words *naibi* and *naipes* thus combines with the remark of the Viterbo chronicler to give great weight to the hypothesis that playing cards came to Europe from Islam.

The word used for 'playing cards' in all three of the Arabic sources cited above is *kanjifah*; and, as pointed out by Mme Serageddin, the same word appears in the verse which forms the upper inscription on the King of Swords in the Istanbul pack, which runs '*kanjifah* brings joy and evermore delights hearts' (*kanjifatun tajlibu al-surūrā wa lam tazal tashraḥu al-ṣudūrā*). This word, too, is of great interest etymologically. It is not in origin an Arabic word, but is adapted from Persian *ganjifeh*; according to the prevalent opinion, *ganjifeh* in turn was borrowed from some undetermined source. From its appearance on the Istanbul card and in the three literary sources, it is reasonable to suppose that *kanjifah* was the regular mediaeval Arabic word for 'playing cards'; it is not generally used in modern Arabic, but, in Iraq, the form *jinjifa* is usual, while *ganjifeh* is the normal term in modern Persian for playing cards of any kind. Thus in fifteenth-century Egypt the word for 'playing cards' was one derived from Persian, while in Spain from the earliest times to the present, and in Italy from the earliest times until the end of the fifteenth century, the words *naipes* and *naibi*, apparently of Arabic origin, were used. (The word *naibi* appears in the Sienese ordinance of 1377, and, in the forms *naibbe* and *naibbi*, in the very earliest certain European reference, the Florentine edict of the same year.)

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[32] The Chronicle of Fra Francesco, edited by Francesco Cristofori, was published in *Archivio storico per le Marche e per l'Umbria*, vol. IV, Foligno, 1888, pp. 261-338; that by della Tuccia, edited by Ignazio Ciampi, in *Cronache e Statuti della Città di Viterbo*, Florence, 1872. See also Pietro Egidi, 'Relazioni delle Chroniche Viterbesi del secolo XV tra di loro e con le fonti', *Scritti vari di Filologia* (a volume of essays for Ernesto Monaci), Rome, 1901, pp. 37-59.

[33] See M. Dummett and K. Abu-Deeb, 'Some remarks on Mamlūk playing cards', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. XXXVI, 1973, pp. 112-14 and 128, for a more detailed discussion.

The resemblance between the Mamlūk pack and the Italian one is too close to be coincidental: one must have been derived from the other. The evidence that we have reviewed – from surviving cards, from documentary references and from etymology – does not, even taken together, constitute an irrefutable demonstration that European cards were derived from Islamic ones: we shall not have such a demonstration until some reference is found to Islamic cards from before playing cards were known in Europe, or some Islamic cards are discovered that can beyond question be dated to before that time. But, even on the evidence that now exists, the proponent of the thesis that the four-suited pack was invented in Europe has to accept a series of wild improbabilities. According to him, playing cards must have been invented, somewhere in Europe, in the second half of the fourteenth century. By the turn of the century, they were known and used in Egypt; but, since they were there called by a name deriving from a Persian word, they cannot have reached Egypt directly from Europe, but must have travelled there via Persia. And what, now, on this theory, can be made of the Viterbo reference? If the chronicler was right in thinking that playing cards were already known in the Islamic world in 1379, and in thinking that the word *naibi* derived from Arabic, then either they must have made the journey from Europe to Persia and from there to the Arab world in a remarkably short time, or playing cards must have been known in Europe for a considerable time before the earliest references to them. If, on the other hand, he was wrong, the words *naipes* and *naibi* become once more quite inexplicable; moreover, it becomes an extraordinary coincidence that, while the Viterbo chronicler was mistaken in deriving the word *naibi* from Arabic, the word *nā'ib* should later have come to be adopted as part of the Arabic name for two of the court cards in each suit. One cannot say that it is impossible: one can say only that, on the evidence now available, no rational considerations can make a thesis that demands such improbabilities seem in the least degree plausible.

Some considerations about the suit-signs in the Italian and Mamlūk packs, while not of great weight in themselves, tell in the same direction, and have been emphasised by Dr Rosenfeld, who, to his great credit, has long argued for the derivation of European cards from Islamic ones.[34] The generally curved shape of the Swords, which, in Italian-suited packs, is what principally differentiates them from the Batons, makes better sense if we suppose that the suit-sign originated in the Islamic world. Batons seem, in turn, to be rather characterless objects to choose for a suit-sign, whereas polo-sticks were highly significant in the Islamic world, and were used as emblems in Mamlūk heraldry. Polo-sticks would not have been recognised as such in Europe, where the game of polo was unknown, and so it is understandable that they should have been converted into batons; but it is worth noting that in the mid-fifteenth century 'Liechtenstein pack', which has five suits, four of them the Latin ones, the Batons somewhat resemble polo-sticks. Particularly interesting is the word *denari* still used in Italian for the Coins suit. Playing-card Coins have always been gold pieces, in the Italian and Spanish packs as well as in the Mamlūk one, and indeed the name of the suit in Spain and in Sicily is *oro* ('gold') and likewise in Portugal *ouro*. In the Istanbul pack, however, the Coins are called *darāhim*, the plural of *dirham*, although the dirham was a silver coin; the word is less odd than the Italian *denari*, which properly signified 'pennies', that is, low-valued copper coins. As Rosenfeld has remarked, the explanation is presumably that the coins on the Islamic cards originally represented dinars (*danānīr* in Arabic), and were so called, and that the Arabic name was replaced in Italian by the etymologically and phonetically similar *denari* or *danari*. Since in Egypt the gold *dīnār* was replaced as currency by the silver *dirham* in 1346, this reinforces the hypothesis that playing cards were known in Egypt at a date preceding that at which there is any evidence for them in Italy, and that it was in the form of Egyptian cards that people in Italy first encountered them.[35]

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[34] See particularly H. Rosenfeld, 'Die Beziehungen der europäischen Spielkarten zum Orient und zum Urschach', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, vol. XLIII, 1960, pp. 1-36, and 'Zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte und Morphogenese von Kartenspiel und Tarock', ibid, vol. LII, 1970, pp. 65-94.

The overwhelming probability, then, is that, in about 1370-75, playing cards came to Europe, very likely through Venice, from Mamlūk Egypt, where they had been known for some time. The etymological evidence suggests that they had reached Egypt from Persia, just as chess had spread throughout the Islamic world from Persia, whither it had arrived before the Muslim conquest. From this point in the trail, however, the evidence becomes patchy.

The type of indigenous Persian playing cards to be found in all museums and private collections is probably irrelevant to our enquiry. These are a special kind usually referred to in the literature on playing cards and card games as As Nas cards, from the name (*ās-nās* or *āsanās*) of the game played with them. They consist of four or five copies of each of five picture cards: *ās* (Ace) or *Shīr va Khorshīd* (Lion and Sun); *Shāh* or *Pādeshāh* (King); *Bībī* (Lady); *Sarbāz* (Soldier); and *Lakat* (a trifle – the card usually shows one or two dancing girls). The different ranks are always distinguished by background colour.[36] The game of As Nas very closely resembles Poker: five cards are dealt to each of the four players, and, though there is no draw, there is a betting procedure just like that of Poker; there is no flush, since there are no suits, and there is also no straight, but otherwise the scoring combinations are just like those of Poker, including the hand known in Poker as ‘full house’ (a three and a pair).[37] Poker itself originated in the United States in the nineteenth century. R.F. Foster, who made a detailed study of its origins, believed that it was a direct development from As Nas as played with a 20-card American pack, the Persian game having reached the United States by way of New Orleans; the name ‘Poker’ he held to be a mispronunciation of ‘Poque’, the name of a French gambling game which French settlers in New Orleans had transferred to the Persian game when it was introduced.[38] Foster held As Nas to be a ‘very ancient’ game, and in this he has been followed by most later writers.[39] John Scarne invokes the authority of a Mr Shapour Fatemi for the preposterous assertion that it is at least 2,000 years old in Iran, and adds that ‘some rather ambiguous historical references suggest that it may be 5,000 years old’.[40] After this, the statement of Mr Alan Wykes that there are references to the popularity of As Nas in fourteenth-century Persian literature seems quite sober.[41] Actually, however, it appears to be as groundless as his purported quotation from a diary of one of Columbus’ seamen, indicating that the game was played by them on board ship, is spurious.[42] In fact, I have been unable to find any evidence that As Nas is any older in Persia than the earliest surviving As Nas cards, that is to say, than the eighteenth or possibly the seventeenth century.[43]

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[35] The literature on playing cards is full of misstatements of fact, given without the references that would enable a persistent reader to correct them. In this book, most of these are passed by; but a few, occurring in recent publications, are indicated, lest they ensnare the unwary. The thesis of the derivation of European playing cards from Muslim ones receives quite unwarranted support from the statement in André François, *Histoire de la carte à jouer*, Ivry, 1974, p. 36, that there is in Palermo a fresco showing Arabs playing cards, with a reference to an article by Signor Vito Arienti in *La Voce del Collezionista* for February, 1973. This statement is erroneous in every detail. In *La Voce del Collezionista*, anno XVIII, no. 1, January-February, 1973, there is, on pp. 41-3, the first part of an article, 'La verità nella leggenda del "Naibi"', by Signor Ferdinando Provenzano, dealing with an Arabic manuscript discovered by him, which he attributes to the traveller Ibn Jubair, and interprets as referring to a card game played by Arabs in Sicily. In *The Playing-Card Information Circle*, no. 26, July 1973, p. 3, its editor, Mr Emanuel S. Newman, stated that there was on p. 41 of *La Voce del Collezionista* for February, 1973, an article by Signor Arienti (a well-known collector of playing cards) describing a fresco in Palermo showing Arabs playing cards. In fact, there is no such article by Signor Arienti in that or any other number of *La Voce del Collezionista*, and the article by Signor Provenzano makes no mention of any such fresco; on the basis of Mr Newman's statement, I myself made a determined but unsuccessful effort to find such a fresco in Palermo. Subsequently, Mr Newman's statement was reprinted in *Le Jolly Joker*, no. 14, September, 1973, p. 17; a letter of correction by me was printed in no. 15, May, 1974, pp. 11-12, but too late to prevent the incorporation of the error into François's book. Signor Arienti is entirely innocent in the matter: he did not write the article in question, which in any case did not contain the alleged statement, and has consistently disclaimed any assertion about a fresco in Palermo. His name has nevertheless been attached to such a claim in a widely circulated book. A correction of the error by myself was printed in the *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. IV, no. 2, 1975, pp. 32-3; since it is one of a kind likely to become one of those spurious items of evidence endlessly reiterated from one book to another, I thought it best to repeat the correction here.

[36] Examples are known of packs specially made for playing some game in which suits are irrelevant, usually a gambling game or game of chance, which have been modified from ones divided into suits either by repeating some one suit or by mixing up the suits. An example of the former are the Japanese packs used for playing Kabu, a game of the Baccarat type: in these, some one of the suits of a Portuguese-derived pack has been selected and then repeated four times; see S. Mann and V. Wayland, *The Dragons of Portugal*, Farnham, 1973. An example of the latter type is the pack made in Bishnupur, West Bengal, for playing the game of Naksha, a game of a similar general type in which the object is to obtain a total of 17 points. This pack consists of four copies of a sequence of twelve cards, consisting of a King or *saheb*, riding on an elephant, a *bibi* or Lady, riding on a horse, and ten numeral cards, each showing an appropriate number of objects, the objects being different from card to card; see Pandit Haraprashad Shastri, *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for 1896*, 1897, p. 2, and R. von Leyden, 'The Naksha Game of Bishnupur', *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. VI, No. 3, 1978, pp. 73-82. It is possible that the origin of *āsanās* cards is similar, that is, that they are a derivative of some pack divided into suits, but that the suit-signs have been suppressed because irrelevant to the game; but if so, it is unclear what the prototype can have been.

Foster identified the first mention of Poker in print as one ‘in Green’s *Reformed Gambler*, which contains a description of a game of poker played on a river steamer in June, 1834’.[44] He is here alluding to Jonathan H. Green, *The Reformed Gambler* (Philadelphia, 1858), on pp. 140-7 of which there is a story about a game of 20-card Poker played on that date in the course of a steamer trip (though not actually on the steamer, but in a house at Louisville); in the copy of this book in the Bodleian Library in Oxford there is a postcard sent on 9 December 1903 to Frederick Jessel by R.F. Foster, saying that he had known Green personally. Green was what the title of his book implies; converted from his evil ways, he devoted the rest of his life to campaigning against gambling (though, according to Foster's postcard, he also invented the rubber-tipped pencil). Actually, there is an earlier and much fuller reference to Poker by Green in his *Exposure of the Arts and Miseries of Gambling* (Philadelphia, 1843). In this, after remarking that 'there is no mention of this game in Mr Hoyle's treatise on games, and I am of the opinion that it was not used in his day', Green says that it is usually played, by two, three or four players, with a pack of 20 cards, consisting of the Aces, Kings, Queens, Jacks and 10s, though he later refers to the game of full deck Poker, played with the full pack of 52 cards.[45] He also includes a long story which refers to Poker as being played as early as 1829.[46] Foster stated that Poker took a long time to get into print, and in 1897 wrote that it 'is not mentioned in the American Hoyles of forty years ago',[47] but in this he was mistaken: what is claimed to be the first account of the game, as called either 'Poker' or 'Bluff', and played with 52 cards and any number of players less than ten, is to be found in *Hoyle's Games* (Philadelphia, 1845), with a brief account of '20-Deck Poker', played with 20 cards.[48] The form with only 20 cards is indeed strikingly similar to As Nas, and, from Green's observations, it seems likely to have been earlier than the 52-card version.

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[37] There is a detailed and well-informed account of As Nas by General A. Houtum Schindler, of Teheran, on pp. 928-9 of S. Culin, *Chess and Playing-Cards*, Philadelphia, 1897 (constituting pp. 665-942 of the Report of the U.S. National Museum for 1896). Probably the earliest description of As Nas published in English was that by ‘Aquarius’ (Louis d’Aguilar Jackson) in his *Italian Games at Cards and Oriental Games*, London, 1890, pp. 58-9.

[38] R.F. Foster, *Foster’s Complete Hoyle*, 2nd and 3rd editions, New York, 1909, 1914, p. 208.

[39] R.F. Foster, *Poker*, New York, 1901, p. 9.

[40] John Scarne, *Scarne on Cards*, 2nd edition, New York, 1955, p. 231.

[41] ‘There was a Persian rummy game of the fourteenth century called *âs-nâs*, which has been adapted by every nation without altering the structural basis of dealing a hand of five cards to each of four players. (Poker and *gin rummy* are the Western world’s most popular variants of âs-nâs.) Columbus’s seamen took the game from the Old World to the New ... and one of them gives an account of it in a journal he kept for his wife: “After the Hail Mary at nightfall those not at watch played at cards, the game having been showed them by sailors from Cathay ... It is a game in which skill adapts to chance, each player having five cards only and these to be matched in every respect to the coat [court] cards and the as [ace].” It seems very likely that the sailors from Cathay ... had taught Columbus’s men âs-nâs. There are certainly several references to the popularity of this game in fourteenth-century Persian literature’, Alan Wykes, *Gambling*, London, 1964, p. 164.

[42] When I enquired of Mr Wykes, he informed me in April 1971 that his notes and manuscript for *Gambling* had been sold to an American university, but did not specify the institution fortunate enough to obtain this material. After further enquiry, Mr Wykes stated in July 1971 that âs-nâs was a game favoured by the fourteenth-century poet Hafiz, and referred me to Muhammad ‘abd al-Ghanī, *A History of Persian Language and Literature at the Mughal Court* (Allahabad, 1929-30), where he thought I should find references to Hafiz playing the game; he said also that he thought he had got the quotation from the journal of one of Columbus’s seamen from Hakluyt’s account of William Hawkins’s voyage to Brazil. When I informed him that both these references had proved completely incorrect, and that a systematic search (by myself in English translation, and by a graduate student in the original) had failed to uncover any reference by Hafiz to *ās-nās*, he finally disclosed, in May 1972, that much of the research for his book had been done by ‘professional researchers’ to whom he had simply telephoned enquiries and put the answers into the narrative when they had been discovered for him. I have the authority of Professor S.E. Morison, the leading expert on Columbus’s voyages, for saying that the quotation given by Mr Wykes is spurious. A method of composition under which the information supplied by a so-called research agency is simply passed on to the reader without having been checked by the author exposes such agencies to the temptation of merely inventing information; readers ought surely to be entitled to feel assured that an author has done his best to make certain that the information to which he attaches his name is correct.

[43] I have not devoted any serious study to As Nas cards; being convinced for a long time by the unanimous assertions of so many writers, and particularly by the circumstantial statements of Mr Wykes, that As Nas was very considerably older than the earliest surviving cards, I concentrated on trying to discover literary references to substantiate this. Most of the As Nas cards in the museums are of the nineteenth century, but some are of the eighteenth; there may be some as early as the seventeenth century, but, having neglected the question, I should not like to make a definite assertion. It is quite certain, however, that, if there are any seventeenth-century As Nas cards, they are rare, and that there are none of any earlier date.

[44] *Foster’s Complete Hoyle*, 1909, 1914, p. 208.

As Foster remarked, 'triplets, fours and sequences were among the earliest recognised combinations of cards and are to be found in all the oldest games'.[49] A great many early card games bear out the truth of this assertion. An example is the Italian game of Cricca, called after the term used in it for a set of three of a kind, a term we shall later find employed in the same sense in the Tarocco game played in Bologna. This game was already mentioned in the sermon of about 1470 quoted by Robert Steele, and it was forbidden in Bergamo in 1491; there are several sixteenth-century references to it.[50] Cricca may or may not have been identical with the game of Gleek, as played in England and described by John Cotgrave in 1662; this three-handed game began, like Piquet, with the players making scores for 'ruff' (having the largest number of cards in a single suit) and then for 'gleeks' and 'murnivals' (sets of three or four of a kind), and ended, again like Piquet, with the hands being played out in tricks.[51] Gleek was an importation from France, where it was known as Glic; there it was referred to as early as 1397, and there are several references to it from the fifteenth century, including ones by Villon and by King René.[52] Again, a game called in Italian Flusso, Flussi or Frussi was also played in France under the name Flux and in Germany as Flüssen. Its name is cognate with our term 'flush', and it is played to this day as a drinking game in Muotatal in Switzerland, in the canton of Schwyz, under the name 'Flüsslen'. It, too, is mentioned in the sermon quoted by Steele, and it was prohibited at Ferrara in 1470, although in the 1490s it was very popular at the d'Este court, and it was referred to by Lorenzo de' Medici, who called it an 'accursed game' (*giuoco maladetto*); there are again many sixteenth-century references.[53] A game called Sequence was played in France and Italy during the sixteenth century; if, as Schreiber believed, it is to be identified with that known variously in German as Quentzen, Quentzel, Quentzlen and possibly also Schwentzlin, it figures, as a game usually permitted, at least when played for small stakes, in various fifteenth-century ordinances, including one of 1443 from Augsburg and of 1448 from Balgau.[54] The recognition of threes and fours of a kind, of flushes and sequences, as scoring combinations, is plainly as old as the fifteenth century and perhaps as old in Europe as playing cards themselves.

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[45] 4th edition, Philadelphia, 1847, pp. 59, 60, 70; on p. 83 is a story concerning a game played in New Orleans in 1835. The title of the book was changed to *Gambling Exposed* for the 1857 edition, but the pagination is exactly the same as in the 1847 one.

[46] 4th edition, pp. 20-59; the references to Poker are on pp. 37-9.

[47] *Foster's Complete Hoyle*, 1897, p. 175. In *Cooncan (Conquián)*, New York, 1913, p. ix, Foster says that 'Cooncan, like Poker, took a long time to get into print'.

[48] Pp. 260-3.

[49] R.F. Foster, *Poker*, New York, 1901, p. 7.

[50] R. Steele, 'A notice of the Ludus Triumphorum', *Archaeologia*, vol. LVII, 1900, pp. 189-200, contains the text of the sermon on gaming: it cites *crica* as *ludus trium cartularum* (a game of three cards), and goes on to say that *ludit hoc ludo dando cartulas a 3 a 3* (one plays this game, dealing the cards in threes). For the Bergamo edict, see W.L. Schreiber, *Die ältesten Spielkarten*, Strasbourg, 1937, p. 79. In the sixteenth century it was referred to by Francesco Berni in 1526 in his *Capitolo della Primiera*, by Cardano in his book *De ludo alearum*, by Garzoni in 1585 in his *Piazza universale* and by John Florio in his dictionary of 1598. Berni also mentions it in his version of Boiardo's *Orlando Inamorato*, Book 3, Canto 6, stanza 53:

> Sembran Costor due giocator' di cricca,
> Ch'abbian il punto tutto due in bastoni.

The *punto* is like the point in Piquet (that player wins who has the most cards in any one suit); this increases the likelihood that the game is identical with Gleek or Glic.

[51] John Cotgrave, *Wit's Interpreter*, 2nd edition, London, 1662, pp. 365-8.

[52] The 1397 reference is from an entry in the account-book of Louis de Valois, Duke of Orleans; see W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 160. That from Villon is from *Le Grand Testament*, line 1705 (the Ballade between stanzas 158 and 159); see *Les Oeuvres de Françoise Villon*, ed. Pierre Messiaen, Paris, 1946, p. 136. The *Grand Testament* was written in 1461. The reference by King René is from *L'Abuzé en Court*, written in 1473; see *Oeuvres du Roi René*, ed. le comte de Quatrebarbes, vol. 4, Angers, 1846, p. 108. See also Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française*, s.v. 'glic'.

One of the distinctive features of Poker is, of course, that it is not merely a game in which such combinations score, but that that is all there is to the game. But games of this general type are also extremely old; Flusso was just such a game, and one of the most famous was the Spanish game of Primero, immensely popular in the sixteenth century both in England and, as Primiera, in Italy. In Primero, each player was dealt four cards, and there were three possible winning combinations, the lowest being the prime or *primiera* (one card of each suit) and the highest being the flush (four cards of one suit); if any player had one of the scoring combinations in his original hand, there was an immediate show-down, otherwise there was a draw. In Primero, however, the stakes were all placed before the deal. The excitement of Poker, on the other hand, derives from the fact that there is a competitive raising of the stakes after the deal and the draw. But this feature is also not original with Poker. It is found, not only in As Nas, but also in the English game of Brag, much played in the United States in the nineteenth century. It also characterises the French game of Bouillotte; as Foster observed, 'the blind, the straddle, the raise, the bluff, table-stakes and freeze-out are all to be found in Bouillotte, which flourished in the time of the French Revolution'.[55] Bouillotte has continued to be played in France down to modern times; it was introduced at the end of the eighteenth century as an improvement on the old game of Brelan, in which the stake was placed before the deal. Brelan is another game of great antiquity; it appears in an edict of Lille of 1458, and was also mentioned by Villon in 1461.[56] The term *brelan* is still used in Bouillotte and in Poker, as played in France, to mean a set of three of a kind. In the passage quoted above from Foster, he goes on to remark that 'the draw from the remainder of the pack existed in the old French game of Ambigu'; Ambigu, much played in France in the eighteenth century, was a derivative from Primero, in which the draw already featured.

From all this it is apparent that there is no reason whatever to assume that As Nas had any direct influence on gambling games of the general type to which Poker belongs, as these were played in Europe. Scarne, taking As Nas to be 2,000 years old, infers that it was the direct ancestor of the European games of this kind; in fact, however, the latter are much older than we have any reason to suppose As Nas to be. It is much more probable that the influence went the other way, that the invention of As Nas was inspired by the example of some European game of this type. General Schindler remarked, in support of this supposition, that the word *ās* is not an indigenous Persian word, and is presumably derived from some European word for 'Ace'.[57] Scarne's theory appears to be that Poker was an immediate development out of the French games, and that these in turn were descended, through Italian games, from the Persian one. He informs us that 'the first mention of the game – or even the word – Poker has been traced by the author', i.e. Scarne, 'to Jonathan H. Green, a reformed gambler, who in certain writings dated 1834 described the rules for a game then being played on the Mississippi steamboats'; possibly he was assisted in this feat by Foster's identical previous discovery, mentioned in his *Complete Hoyle*, a book quoted elsewhere by Scarne in order to jeer at Foster's remarks about the game of Conquián.[58] He goes on to say that the game did not appear in the American *Hoyle* until thirty or more years later; as we have seen, this was also Foster's opinion, but it is mistaken. When the game did appear in *Hoyle*, Scarne tells us, it was called, not 'Poker', but 'Bluff', and the rules were those given by Green, i.e. a maximum of four players using a 20-card pack. I have not myself seen an American *Hoyle* in which 'Poker' is not the principal name used, though the 1845 book cited above uses 'Bluff' as an alternative; it also treats the 20-card version as a minor variant. Scarne asserts, however, that it was only about forty years later, i.e. after 1900, that *Hoyle* first called the game 'Poker'.[59]

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[53] See Steele, op. cit., For the Ferrara ordinance of 1470, see G. Campori, 'Le Carte da Giuoco dipinte per gli Estensi', *Atti e Memorie delle RR. Deputazioni di Storia Patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, vol. III, 1874, p. 124. For the game as played in the d'Este court, see F. Malaguzzi-Valeri, *La corte di Lodovico il Moro*, vol. 1, Milan, 1913, p. 575, A. Luzio, *I Precettori d'Isabella d'Este*, Ancona, 1887, p. 22, and A. Luzio and R. Renier, *Mantova e Urbino*, 1893, p. 64. The game is again mentioned by Berni, Cardano, Garzoni and Florio. For the Lorenzo de' Medici poem, see *Tutti i Trionfi Carri, Mascherate ò canti Carnascialeschi andati per Firenze* (collected by Antonio Francesco Grazzini, called il Lasca), Florence, 1559, p. 7, where the game is called Frussi. For French references, see Godefroy, s.v. 'glic' and 'séquence'; E.S. Taylor, *History of Playing Cards*, cites another, by the Sieur de Cholières in 1586, and the game is also mentioned in Thomas Varnet and Natalis Beda, *La Petite dyablerie*, Paris, *c.* 1510 (a translation of St Bernardine's sermon on gaming), and by Rabelais in 1534, among Gargantua's games. Flüssen was given by Fischart in 1575 in his translation of Rabelais; Heinrich Rausch, *Das Speilverzeichnis im 25. Kapitel von Fischarts Geschichtsklitterung*, Strasbourg, 1908, cites Charles Schmidt, *Historisches Wörterbuch der elsässischen Mundart*, 1901, p. 231, as in turn citing a text of 1524 in which the game is mentioned. As *flossen* or *flössn*, the game is also referred to in two poems of Hans Sachs, the first written in 1539; see *Hans Sachs*, ed. Adalbert von Keller (later vols. by E. Goetze), vol. V, *Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart*, Tübingen, 1870, pp. 31, 225. For further references and information about the game as now played in Muotatal, see Peter F. Kopp, '"Flüssliss" – Vom politischen Kartenspiel der Mächte zum Trinkspiel der Muotataler', *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 35, 1978, pp. 101-7.

[54] The game of Sequence is mentioned, under various cognate names, by Rabelais, Cardano, Garzoni, Fischart, Florio and the Sieur de Cholières; see footnotes 45 and 48. It is also given by Randle Cotgrave in his French dictionary of 1611. For the ordinances relating to Quentzen, see W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., pp. 36, 39, 45-6 and 153.

[55] R.F. Foster, *Foster's Complete Hoyle*, 1st edition, New York, 1897, p. 175.

[56] See the reference to Villon in footnote 47, and W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 64.

In arguing for the immediate derivation of Poker from French gambling games, and its ultimate derivation from As Nas, Scarne says, of the game described by Green, that some features are of French origin, but that its structure is Iranian. Later he states that the earliest published Poker rules, which, by inference from his earlier remarks, must have appeared in the 1860s, established its French antecedents: it used the Piquet pack, the pack was cut to the left and dealt to the right, and the French terms *brelan* and *tricon* were used; the draw was taken from the French game of Ambigu. He goes on, in a passage strikingly reminscent of Foster, to state that 'Bouillotte, which antedated the Revolution, developed ... the blind, the straddle, the raise, table stakes, the freeze-out and (back to Iran!) the bluff'. Scarne's remarks about what he takes to be the earliest published rules of Poker are very surprising: I have not attempted to make a complete search through the vast number of nineteenth-century American *Hoyles*, but I know of none which gives a version of Poker (or Bluff) played with the 32-card Piquet pack, or in which the cards are dealt counter-clockwise or three of a kind called *brelan* or *tricon*. Indeed, Scarne's claim appears to contradict his earlier statement that the rules, as given in the earliest accounts, were the same as Green's. The explanation seems to be that, as in so many other observations of Scarne's, he is here, without acknowledgment, following Foster, and that, this time, he has misunderstood his source. Foster, commenting on a game called Whiskey Poker which he described in his *Complete Hoyle* of 1897, says that it has 'really little or nothing in common with the true spirit of poker, and is simply the very ancient game of Commerce, played with five cards instead of three. The descriptions of this game in the earliest Hoyles betray its French origin: particularly in the use of the Piquet pack; the French custom of cutting to the left and dealing to the right; and the use of the words "brelan" and "tricon". In later descriptions of the "new form" of Commerce, about 1835, we find 52 cards are used, and dealt from left to right, and the names of the combinations are changed to "pairs-royal", "sequences" and "flushes"'.[60] When Foster speaks here of 'the descriptions of this game in the earliest Hoyles', he means by 'this game' neither true Poker nor even Whiskey Poker, the latter of which he may have been the first to describe in print, [61] but Commerce, which is distinguished from Whiskey Poker, as he says, by the fact that each player receives only three cards. The first 'Hoyle' to contain a description of Commerce was probably the improved edition of Charles Pigot's *New Hoyle* (London, 1805), and the first known to me to do so, of those published in the United States, was *Hoyle's Improved Edition of the Rules for Playing Fashionable Games* (Philadelphia, 1838).[62] Foster was trying to establish the French origin of Commerce, the immediate progenitor of Whiskey Poker, a game which, as Foster said, was not really a form of Poker at all, but an adaptation of Commerce to the use of Poker hands; Scarne's argument for the French parentage of Poker embodies a confusion.

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[57] S. Culin, *Chess and Playing-Cards*, Philadelphia, 1897, p. 929.

[58] *Scarne on Cards*, New York, 1955, p. 230. I am not suggesting that Scarne did not look up Green's books; he remarks, for instance, that Green noted that the American *Hoyle* then current neglected to mention the game, which must be an allusion to Green's comment about Hoyle, quoted above, in the *Exposure of the Arts and Miseries of Gambling* (not in *The Reformed Gambler* cited by Foster). All the same, he looked at them in a remarkably cursory fashion. There are no writings of Green's dated 1834; 1834 is the date referred to by him in *The Reformed Gambler*, and later cited by Foster. Scarne makes the same trifling error as Foster in thinking the game of 1834 to have been played on a steamboat; he misinterprets Green's remark about Hoyle, which appears to concern Edmond Hoyle's original book; and, like Foster, he overlooks Green's mention of the 52-card form (possibly Foster did not know the *Exposure*).

[59] The *Hoyles* were originally reprints of books issued in London as later editions of Hoyle's famous work, more and more games being added. After a time, the American editions came to include games played in the United States but unknown in England; eventually, they became quite independent of the volumes published in London. In this way, the word *Hoyle* came to be a mere generic term for a book with rules of games, and to this day American writers on card games frequently include it in their titles. Although, as usual, the American *Hoyles*, published in Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago and no doubt elsewhere, copied from one another and reprinted accounts of games unchanged through many editions, they do not form a single series; there were several different publishers, whose selection of games differed somewhat.

Foster's own theory was quite different. The recognised combinations of cards were ancient; the principle of the betting procedure was well known from Brag, and its details may have been derived from Bouillotte; the draw may have been derived from Ambigu. But, for him, the crucial new feature, distinguishing Poker from other games of its general type, consisted in each player's being dealt five cards, making possible a hand of two pairs or that of Full House. In Primero and Ambigu, a hand consisted of four cards, in Brelan, Bouillotte, Brag and Commerce, of only three, as also in Flüssen. The great innovation of Poker was the distribution of five cards to each player; and it was therefore the origin of this that needed explaining. Impressed with the similarity of the early twenty-card Poker to As Nas, Foster maintained that As Nas had reached the United States directly from Persia. His full reasons for taking this view lie buried in a New York daily paper for which he was the card-game correspondent, and in which he reported his studies of the origin of Poker;[63] on the face of it, a direct contact at that time between Persia and the United States, with no European intermediary, seems somewhat unlikely. Whether there is any compelling reason to assume it is unclear. Scarne, who tacitly agrees with Foster on so many points, scornfully rejects his derivation of the name 'Poker' from 'Poque': 'I can't endorse this kind of breezy scholarship,' he declares; 'I never played Poque, I have never seen it played, I don't know its structure, and I never encountered anyone better informed on the subject than I'.[64] Alan Wykes, likewise rejecting the derivation, tells us that 'such information as there is about poque suggests that it was a game of the whist family'.[65] Scarne's challenge is childishly simple to meet, and Wykes's statement to refute, since Poque is still described in current French card-game books; the earliest description of it of which I know is from 1714.[66] Played with the 36-card pack, Poque has several extraneous features: there are fixed stakes, advanced before the deal, to be gained by the holder of each of the top cards of a suit to be determined by turning a card, and, after the show-down, a form of 'Stops' play takes place (of the kind that occurs in a game such as Newmarket). But the core of the game has a fair resemblance to Poker: betting, after the deal, on who has the best combination of cards, the players standing, raising or folding (dropping out). The combinations recognised are single pairs, two pairs, threes and fours of a kind: the crucial similarity lies in the fact that each player is dealt a hand of five cards. Foster's idea was that French settlers in New Orleans recognised the similarity of the newly introduced As Nas to their own game of Poque, and transferred the name to it; but an alternative possibility is that Poker was a direct development out of Poque, arrived at by suppressing the extraneous features and introducing new winning combinations. In the latter case, the resemblance to As Nas must have been accidental; readers must judge whether the twenty cards and the Full House together form too great a coincidence. Poque itself, though not very ancient, is closely related to the German game of Poch or Pochen, whose existence Scarne does recognise; if the conjecture of Schreiber is correct, that the card game prohibited under the name *bocken* in many German municipal ordinances of the fifteenth century is to be identified with Pochen, it, too, is among the earliest European games.[67]

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[60] *Foster's Complete Hoyle*, 1897, pp. 174-5.

[61] Foster does not claim priority for his description of Whiskey Poker; the earliest account known to me in any other book is that in *The Standard Hoyle*, New York, 1899, p. 147. *Hoyle's Games: Autograph Edition*, New York, 1914, p. 189, remarks of Commerce that it is the parent of Whiskey Poker.

[62] Foster's observations about the old and new forms of Commerce are inaccurate. Most of the *Hoyles*, both British and American, distinguish between two forms of Commerce, and some, including the works of 1805 and 1838 cited in the text, say that one is the new form and the other the old one; a few, such as *Hoyle's Card Games: an improved edition*, Glasgow, 1827, describe only the 'new' form, without calling it such. But it is the form with the French terminology that is said to be the 'new' one. In this, a set of three of a kind is called 'tricon' (the term 'brelan' is not mentioned), and the deal is counter-clockwise; in the 'old' form, the term is 'pair-royal' and the deal is clockwise. The word *tricon* and the counter-clockwise deal do characterise Commerce as played in France; the latter is not the usual French practice, so possibly the game was of Italian origin. I have not found a mention in any of the *Hoyles* of Commerce being played with the 32-card pack. I do not mean to question the thesis that Commerce reached England in the first place from France; but Foster has oversimplified the history – there must have been a second wave of French influence on the playing of this game.

[63] An article in the New York *Sun* of 22 May 1904, which I have not seen, and which Foster refers to in the 1909 and 1914 editions of his *Complete Hoyle*, p. 208.

[64] *Scarne on Cards*, 1955, p.232. I have devoted attention to Scarne because there is particular danger that his remarks will mislead those readers who are unable to check the now much less accessible works of R.F. Foster. The danger springs from Scarne's calculated contrast between his own great knowledge of the subject and the ignorance of supposed experts, conveying the impression that the latter have contented themselves with ill-informed guesses, while he has engaged in genuine research. It is plain that a large

As remarked, without a knowledge of Foster's detailed evidence, it is impossible to form a judgment about the theory that As Nas was the direct progenitor of Poker. Whether that theory is sound or not, it is plain that As Nas and As Nas cards tell us nothing, on the evidence now available, about the transmission of playing cards and of card games from the Islamic world to Europe; until any contrary evidence comes to light, it would be helpful if writers on the subject would cease to reiterate the baseless assertion that As Nas is of great antiquity. A different type of Persian playing cards, much more important for our purpose, is a great deal more elusive. In his *Voyages en Perse*, published in 1686, the Chevalier Chardin wrote, 'There are cards among the common people, which they call *ganjaphé* (*kandjaféh*). They are made of wood, very well painted. The pack is of ninety cards with eight suits'.[68] Chardin was evidently not very interested in these cards, and his statement must involve some error, since 90 is not divisible by 8. Romain Merlin, in his book of 1869, asserts that the Persians had a 96-card pack, known as *Ghendgifeh*, divided into eight suits of twelve cards each, and illustrates, as examples of such Persian cards, one from a pack in his own collection. rectangular and made of ivory, stating that other examples are in the Douce collection and in that of a M. Didot. He adds, rather oddly, that they generally have a round shape among the Persians of India, but a shape like European cards among the Persians of Teheran.[69] D'Allemagne, the great historian of French playing cards, says in his travel book about Persia, published in 1911, that there are two types of Persian playing cards, the As Nas cards and a 96-card pack with eight suits of twelve cards each. The latter, he says, are of Indian origin, but the Persians have substituted a rectangular shape for the circular one used in India; the oldest Persian cards are painted on ivory, and several specimens of these have survived, but later ones are made of lacquered cardboard. In illustration, he reproduces two

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part of Scarne's researches into the history of Poker consisted in an excessively hasty reading of Foster. Foster himself, though no more incapable of making mistakes than any of us, really was a scrupulous and painstaking investigator of the history of card games, one of the very few such in that field. It would be a pity if his conclusions were to be obscured or his reputation tarnished by groundless attacks or by others taking the credit for his discoveries.

[65] Alan Wykes, op. cit., p. 171.

[66] See, e.g., Frans Gerver, *Le Guide Marabout de tous les jeux de cartes*, Verviers, 1966, pp. 240-2; the 1714 account is from the *Académie universelle des jeux* for that year.

[67] For a modern description of Pochen, see Roland Gööck, *Freude am Kartenspiel*, Gütersloh, 1967, pp. 64-6. For *bocken*, see W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., pp. 36, 38-42, 44, 148; also the edition of Hans Sachs cited in footnote 53, vol. V, pp. 31 and 47, and the work of Heinrich Rausch cited in the same footnote.

[68] Vol. III, chapter 12, 'Des exercises et des jeux des Persans', of the section 'Description générale de la Perse', p. 451.

[69] R. Merlin, *L'Origine des cartes à jouer*, Paris, 1869, plate 69 and pp. 122-4.

plates from his book *Les Cartes à jouer*, showing different packs, both said to be made of ivory; the first is assigned to the nineteenth century and said to be reproduced from Chatto's book, and the second to the eighteenth or nineteenth century, with an unstated owner.[70] The mention of Chatto is a mistake: the cards are actually reproduced from S.W. Singer's fine book of 1816, where they are captioned 'Oriental Cards on Ivory in the Cabinet of F. Douce Esq.'[71] The Douce collection is now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, but no longer contains the cards illustrated by Singer and D'Allemagne, though it has some round ivory cards from a 96-card pack, and, in a box labelled 'Persian Cards', some rectangular lacquered cardboard ones very similar to, though not identical with, those shown in D'Allemagne's second illustration; Francis Douce lived from 1757 to 1834. The cards shown in D'Allemagne's second illustration, like the rectangular ones now in the Douce collection, have a decorative arch at the top of each card; the same is true of a single rectangular numeral card, of lacquered cardboard, in the Fournier Museo de Naipes in Vitoria, listed in the catalogue as Persian.[72] These arches are lacking in the ivory cards illustrated by Merlin, and likewise in those illustrated by both Singer and D'Allemagne; it is very probable that D'Allemagne was mistaken in saying that those shown in his second illustration were of ivory.

The 96-card pack is well known as one of the types of indigenous playing-card packs, usually known generically as *ganjifa*, used in India: it is still being made, although all the traditional types of playing cards and of card games have been to a large extent ousted by those of European origin. Traditional Indian playing cards are all hand-painted, and are usually circular. Merlin and D'Allemagne were wrong, however, to imply that a rectangular shape indicates a non-Indian origin: there are plenty of surviving rectangular Indian Ganjifa cards. In particular, the card in the Fournier Museum, those now in the Bodleian Library and those shown in D'Allemagne's second illustration all closely resemble 96-card packs made in the Deccan and illustrated in Rudolf von Leyden's catalogue of Indian cards in the Spielkarten-Museum at Leinfelden.[73] Furthermore, the style of the ivory cards shown by Merlin and by Singer and D'Allemagne appears to be Moghul rather than Persian. It seems very likely, therefore, that all the cards from 96-card packs claimed as Persian are in fact from India; it is noteworthy that D'Allemagne, who was of course deeply interested in playing cards, does not claim that he actually saw any such cards during his Persian travels. I am unsure whether the game of As Nas is still played in contemporary Iran, but it is certain that no 96-card pack is any longer to be found there; European playing cards have been adopted, and the word *ganjifeh* or *ganjīfeh* ordinarily refers to them. In face of this, one might well doubt whether the 96-card pack was ever known in Persia. Nevertheless, as we shall see, such doubts would be misplaced: the statements of Merlin and of D'Allemagne that such a pack was in use in Persia are perfectly correct, and can be supported by more than the flimsy testimony of Chardin. It is strange that, so far as I am aware, no cards from a Persian 96-card pack have been preserved.

Since they have not, it is best to start with ones of which there is a plentiful supply, traditional Indian cards. With the negligible exception of the cards from Mysore known as Chad cards, of the special Naksha cards mentioned in footnote 36, and of certain packs based on Portuguese prototypes, all traditional Indian packs have an even number of suits, each consisting of ten numeral cards and two court cards. There are three main types: one with twelve suits, whose iconography relates to the famous epic, the *Rāmāyaṇa*; the *Dasavatāra* pack, with ten suits, each representing one of the incarnations of Vishnu; and the 96-card pack, with eight suits, used principally by Muslims and sometimes referred to as the Moghul pack, with a purely secular iconography.[74] The word *ganjifa*, or some corruption of it such as *ganjpa*, is commonly used in India to refer to playing cards of all three types, and, equally, to the principal family of games played with them. In all the types, each card has a suit-sign, and the numeral cards, from

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[70] Henry-René D'Allemagne, *Du Khorassan au pays des Backhtiaris: trois mois de voyage en Perse*, vol. I, Paris, 1911, pp. 163-5, and *Les Cartes à jouer*, vol. I, Paris, 1906, pp. 4, 8 and 9.

[71] Samuel Weller Singer, *Researches into the History of Playing Cards*, London, 1816, facing p. 16 and p. 49.

[72] Catalogue no. Persia-4.

[73] R. von Leyden, *Indische Spielkarten*, Leinfelden-Echterdingen, 1977; see, e.g., no. 42.

[74] Nowadays a twelve-suited pack is made in Orissa consisting of the *Dasavatāra* pack with two additional suits.

1 to 10, are pip cards, their values being indicated by the number of occurrences of the suit-sign; often the suits are further distinguished by background colour. Of the two court cards, the higher normally represents a King, and is called *Pādshāh*, *Mīr* or *Rāja*; in the *Dasavatāra* pack, it represents an incarnation of Vishnu, and is accordingly often called *Avatāra*. The lower court card is called *Wazīr* (Vizier) or *Pradhān* (Minister).

Although these Indian packs have a larger number of suits, a smaller number of court cards per suit, and different suit-signs from the European and Mamlūk packs, they qualify as regular packs under the definition of that term given earlier. Despite the obvious differences, the Indian packs are so closely related to the European ones that a connection is undeniable: the question is only what it is. The existence of a connection between European cards and Indian ones becomes even more evident when we look at the family of games generally known as Ganjifa, the more important of the two main families of Indian card games. The other such family, known generally as Naksha, comprises games of chance, of the same general type as Vingt-et-Un, in which the player's aim is to come as close as possible to a total value of 17 points on the cards he holds. A preliminary report on these games was given by Dr Kaushal Gupta in 1978; they are often played with ordinary Indian playing cards, and Dr Gupta has discovered a reference to them in the *Humāyun-Nāmeh*, relating to the year 1545, in which, perhaps significantly, the word used for 'playing cards' is not *ganjifeh* but *waraq*. In Europe, perhaps the oldest known game of this general type is Thirty-One, a game also mentioned in the Steele sermon and by Hans Sachs. Though such games are immensely widespread, being known also in Japan and Korea, their history has been so little studied that no deductions can be made concerning the direction of influence between these various areas. The Ganjifa family, however, consists of trick-taking games played without trumps and sharing a number of special features. Whichever type of pack is used, one invariable feature is the same peculiarity of card order that we noticed as prevailing in fifteenth-century Italy and Spain. In all the suits, the Kings rank highest and the Ministers the second highest; but, in half the suits, the 10 follows the Minister, and then the 9, and so on down to the Ace, whereas, in the other half, the Ace follows the Minister, and then the 2, and so on down to the 10. It is absolutely unthinkable that so bizarre a practice should have arisen independently in different parts of the world.

Playing cards can have entered Europe only with one or more games to be played with them. In view of the dominant position occupied, among European card games other than pure gambling games, by those of the trick-taking category, it would be natural, in any case, to suppose that trick-taking games were among those introduced together with playing cards themselves. Moreover, despite their enormous variety, almost all trick-taking games, not only in Europe, but also in China and in India, have certain common features which suggest that they are all offshoots from a single stem. One such feature, all but invariable, is the rule that the winner of a trick leads to the next trick. We are so used to this that we hardly notice that other possibilities are quite conceivable. The lead might steadily rotate, from trick to trick, irrespective of who won the tricks, just as, in most European games, the deal rotates, from round to round, irrespective of who won the preceding round. Or, again, a player might continue to lead as long as he won, and, as soon as he lost, the lead might then pass to the next player in rotation, regardless of who had won the last trick: this is the rule for the deal in most Chinese games. But we never find either of these perfectly possible rules: the rule is always that the winner of a trick leads to the next one. Another nearly universal feature is that, unless a trump is played, or when there are no trumps, only a card of the suit led can win the trick. Not only can we imagine different arrangements, but they are occasionally found: for instance, in the games of le Truc and Putt, played respectively in France and, formerly, in England, only the rank counts, irrespective of suit, and, if there is no card of rank higher than the rest, no-one wins the trick; this is also in large part the rule in the game of Aluette, played on the western coast of France, and in that of el Truco, played in Spain and Argentina. These very rare exceptions serve only to point up how constant is the usual rule, not only in European games, but in Chinese and Indian ones as well. The persistence of these common features makes it probable that trick-taking games are ultimately all descended from some common ancestor.

The occurrence, both in India and in Europe, of the curious practice of ordering the numeral cards in one direction in half the suits and in the reverse direction in the other half shows a connection, not merely between the playing cards of the two areas, but between the card play of Europe and of India; and, since the principal Indian games are trick-taking ones, the connection holds within this category of card games. Indeed, it is only for trick-taking games that it is necessary to have a ranking of the cards within each suit. Admittedly, for a game in which a player scores for having a sequence of three or more cards within a suit, some ordering is necessary; but it need only be a cyclic order – we have to know which cards are adjacent, but need have no conception of one's ranking *higher* than another. There is, indeed, an exception in those games in which only the player with the highest-ranking sequence of a given length can score; but it is precisely in such a case that it becomes impossibly inconvenient to have the ordering running in different directions in different suits. When the 10 ranks high in Swords and low in Coins, it would be very difficult to recognise at a glance that the sequence 3, 4, 5, 6, of Coins was higher than the sequence 7, 6, 5, 4, of Swords. Any reference to the ranking of the cards found in early sources may thus be taken as testimony to the prevalence of trick-taking play.

We can be certain that the connection between European and Indian playing cards and card games did not consist in a *direct* derivation of either from the other. Trick-taking games existed in Europe long before the first direct contact with India in 1498. Conversely, although Indian versions of the Portuguese-suited pack, retaining its three court cards per suit, were occasionally produced, the 96- and 144-card packs were known in India from at least the time of Akbar, and, as we shall see, the former was known in Persia earlier still; there simply is not time for the one to have developed out of the other, by multiplying the number of suits and suppressing one court card from each suit, with no consciousness of the recent date of the innovation or of its derivation from a European prototype. Moreover, by the sixteenth century the idea of trumps had been adopted for trick-taking games in most of Europe, an idea wholly lacking from Indian Ganjifa games. The resemblance between European and Indian playing cards and card games must therefore be explained either by an *indirect* derivation of either from the other, or by their both being derived from a common source. Even if we knew nothing of playing cards in Mamlūk Egypt or in Persia, this would imply their presence in the mediaeval Islamic world, as the only possible route of transmission to or from Europe, whichever hypothesis was adopted.

In fact, the Indian Ganjifa games are too unlike European ones to give any basis for a hypothesis of the indirect derivation of either from the other. They share the common feature of being trick-taking games, and the peculiarity of card order; but the Indian games have several features that make them utterly different from any game known in Europe. The most striking of these is the universal rule that a player who holds the highest card not yet played in any suit, known as *hukm*, is bound to play it to a trick to which a card of that suit is led, on pain of its demotion to be the lowest card of the suit. This rule obliterates all the opportunities for tactical play of the kind that characterises European trick-taking games, and makes the Indian games a test of memory much more than of strategic skill. Another constant feature is the existence of strong, and often complicated, constraints on what card may be played by the player who leads to a trick. In European games, there are usually constraints, such as the obligation to follow suit, on the cards which may be played to a trick by subsequent players; but, with rare exceptions, the player with the lead may lawfully play any card that he chooses.[75]. Yet another common feature of Indian Ganjifa games is the way the game begins: the player who holds the King of a particular suit leads it, together with a low card, to a double trick, to which the other players all play two cards; this double trick is automatically won by the player who led to it, the low card, called the 'throne' of the King, acquiring the power to beat any other card. This mode of opening the game is, again, quite unknown in Europe, where, in trick-taking games without bidding, the lead to the first trick usually belongs to the player next in rotation after the dealer. A number of writers assert that Ganjifa games resemble Ombre; but, apart from their both being trick-taking games, and sharing the peculiarity about the ranking of the cards in different suits, there is no similarity at all: Ombre has both bidding and trumps, which Ganjifa lacks.

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[75] A few games have minor constraints on the lead, such as not leading a trump to the first trick; almost the only one with strong constraints was the nineteenth-century German game of Fünfzehnern, a four-handed game without trumps played with the 32-card German-suited pack. Each player played for himself and received eight cards; in each suit, the cards ranked, in descending order, Deuce, King, Ober, Unter, 10, 9, 8, 7, and the top five cards had, respectively, point-values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. A player received or paid in proportion to the number of points he had on cards won in tricks over or below 15. A player who won a trick was obliged first to lead out all his master cards and then to lead again the suit of that trick by winning which he first gained the lead, if he could. Some also required that, if he could not, he must then instead lead that suit of the previous trick in which the lead changed hands. (Suppose that A leads Leaves to the first trick, and B wins. B now leads two master cards, the Deuce and King of Hearts; having no master cards left, he must now lead Leaves again if he can. If he cannot, he may lead any suit; say he leads Acorns, and C wins. C, having led out his master cards, must then lead Acorns again, if he can. Under the strict rule, if he cannot lead Acorns, he must now go back to Leaves, if he can,

In view of this, there is no reason to postulate any European influence on the games played in India with the eight-, ten- and twelve-suited packs; and it is equally doubtful that those games are even the remote ancestors of the games known in Europe. Rather, it seems likely that the games played in India represent a development, along a different branch, from some more basic trick-taking game that formed the common ancestor of the Indian games and of European games of this category. This does not in itself rule out the possibility that this remote common ancestor originated in India.

It is to be presumed that trick-taking games, probably along with card games of other types, entered Europe from the Islamic world together with playing cards themselves. And since, as we have seen, European playing cards and card play probably had no influence on the Indian many-suited packs and the games played with them, the coincidence about the peculiarity of card order is most reasonably explained by supposing that that practice, too, was derived by European card-players from that of Muslim ones. We have no evidence whatever, at present, for the kind of card game played in Mamlūk Egypt; but one feature of the Istanbul pack does partially corroborate the supposition that, in it, the numeral cards ranked in different orders in different suits. This is the fact that, while, in every suit, all the court cards have upper inscriptions with verses, in Swords it is the three highest-numbered numeral cards that do so, while in Coins and Polo-Sticks it is the three lowest-numbered ones that do (assuming that the missing Ace of Coins did, or, as is more likely, that it is the original Ace of that suit that has been converted into the Viceroy). In the Cups suit, admittedly, no numeral cards bear upper inscriptions; but, since most of the inscriptions suggest that the cards bearing them are good ones to have, it seems quite probable that, in Coins and Polo-Sticks, the numeral cards ran from Ace (high) down to 10 (low), while in Swords and, presumably, Cups, they ran from 10 (high) down to Ace (low). It has to be conceded that this does not completely tally with the practice in Europe with the Latin-suited pack, in which it was in the suits of Swords and Batons that the higher-numbered cards beat the lower-numbered ones, and in Cups and Coins that the opposite happened; but perhaps this alteration is one that could fairly easily have occurred in the course of transmitting a new kind of game.

As we saw, the use of the word *kanjifah* for the Mamlūk cards strongly suggests that playing cards came to Egypt from Persia. We have also seen that some writers have associated the 96-card eight-suited pack with Persia as well as with India. Certainly, this pack, as used in India, has Persian connections; not only is it sometimes referred to as the Moghul pack, but the very names of the suits, in the most usual form of the pack, are Persian words. These are: *sefīd* (white); *tāj* (crown); *gholām* (slave); *shamsher* (sword); *sūrkh* (red); *chang* (lyre); *bharat* (document or cheque); and *qimāsh* (goods or cloth). The names *sefīd* and *sūrkh* are sometimes replaced by other words meaning 'coin', and the suit-signs on these two suits are a silver and a gold disc respectively. We find exactly this eight-suited pack mentioned in Persian sources. Ettinghausen has drawn attention to two articles on the subject in Persian journals.[76] In one, by Dr A.N. Manzavī, there is

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because that was the suit of the last trick, other than the trick in Acorns which C won, in which the lead changed hands.) Finally, if a player held the King and Ober of some suit, but not the Deuce, he might, when he was legally entitled to lead that suit, lead the Ober, saying '*Zwang*' ('Obligation'): the player holding the Deuce was then obliged to play it to that trick. This did not apply if he led a card lower than the Ober or chose not to say '*Zwang*'. Particularly in the rule requiring a player to lead out his master cards (a rule not applying to the first trick, however), this game has a certain resemblance to Ganjifa; but this is presumably fortuitous.

[76] R. Ettinghausen, op. cit., pp. 75-7. The articles are:

printed a set of 96 quatrains by the poet Ahlī Shīrāzī, who died in 1536, one for each of the cards in a pack of *ganjifeh*: the composition of the pack is exactly that known to us from the eight-suited Indian packs. Manzavī also quotes from two seventeenth-century Persian writers, Mīrzā Ṣādiq and Ṭughrāi Mashhadī, who wrote about the cards and the games played with them, but stated that the popularity of these games was then waning in Persia; at least one of the games cited is known from later Indian sources. According to another article quoted by Ettinghausen, by Dr B.T. Khānī, the game was formerly believed to have been invented by Mīr Ghiyāth ad-Dīn Manṣūr Shīrāzī, who died between 1533 and 1543, and was popular in the reign of Shāh ‘Abbās I (1587-1628), but forbidden by Shāh ‘Abbās II (1642-1667).

It is here that there is a big lacuna in the evidence now available to us. It is certain that the 96-card pack was in use in Persia in the early part of the sixteenth century; it is also clear that it was known in India during the reign of the Emperor Akbar the Great (1556-1605). Indeed, the whole Moghul court was predominantly Persian in cultural orientation, and Persian writers and artists were regularly accustomed to visit the Imperial court. We have as yet no definite evidence that playing cards were known at all in India before the sixteenth century; but it is likely that they were known there well before that. As we have seen, it is also probable that, by the first half of the fourteenth century or earlier, playing cards had entered Egypt from Persia. The 52-card Mamlūk pack, with its three court cards per suit and its four suits, can, however, hardly have been derived from the 96-card pack, with its two cards per suit and eight suits. It looks, rather, as though, behind both the 52-card pack and the 96-card one lay some earlier evolutionary stage of which no trace has so far been discovered: say a 48-card pack with four suits and only two court cards in each suit, which, in the one case, was enlarged by the addition of a third court card to each suit, and, in the other, by doubling the number of suits. There is no reason to assume that the word *ganjifeh* always relates to a pack with eight or more suits; from the fact that the word was borrowed to apply to the Mamlūk cards, it is quite likely that it was earlier used in Persia for some pack with only four suits.[77] There is, for example, a famous passage in the *Bābur-Nāmeh*, which is written in the Chagatai dialect of Mongol, telling how in 1527 the first Moghul Emperor Bābur sent a pack of *ganjifa* as a present; Bābur was Turkish by descent and aspired to be Persian in culture.[78] In view of the date, this is very likely to have been a 96-card pack; but we cannot take this for granted.

The hypothesis that the 52-card Mamlūk pack, as introduced into Europe, resulted by the addition of an extra court card from an earlier 48-card pack gains in plausibility from the fact that, while the title ‘Viceroy’ (*nā’ib malik*) was a standard one under the Mamlūk Sultanate, the title ‘Second Viceroy’ (*thānī nā’ib* or *nā’ib thānī*) does not appear to have been used for any actual officials; it looks very much like a completely unimaginative piece of nomenclature adopted at a time when it was desired to add a third court card to the existing two. A further consideration of the Istanbul pack prompts a more radical speculation. The cards now completely missing from the set are the Ace and 6 of Coins and the Second Viceroy and 2 of Swords. The secondary cards which have been used to replace cards from the primary pack lost at an earlier stage are the Second Viceroy of Coins, the 9 and 10 of Swords and the Second Viceroy and Ace of Polo-Sticks. Thus only the suit of Cups retains all thirteen cards of the primary pack. At first glance, the lost primary cards, which need not, and probably were not, all lost at the same time, seem a fairly random selection, although it might strike one as

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‘Ali Naqī Manzavī, ‘Ganjafeh-ye Ahlī Shīrāzī’, part 1, *Dānesh*, no 4, April 1953, pp. 221-8, part 2, ibid, no. 5, September 1953, pp. 305-8; ‘Ali Naqī Manzavī, ‘Ganjafeh-ye Shāhid-e Ṣādiq’, *Dānesh*, no. 8, October 1954, pp. 459-60; Behrūz Taqī Khānī, ‘Ganjafeh’, *Yaghmā*, vol. 13, 1960, pp. 296-300.

[77] R. Ettinghausen, op. cit., p. 75, cites a quotation given in the Neẓām Dictionary of Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Alī from a fifteenth-century Persian work, the *Javāher-Nāmeh* of Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr, of a passage speaking of *ganjafeh* as being carved from turquoise. If this were correct, it would be the earliest Persian reference to *ganjifeh* so far known; but I am informed by Dr K. Gupta that the word used was not *ganjafeh* and did not refer to playing cards (and also that the material was actually lapis lazuli).

[78] *Memoirs of Zehir-ed-Din Muhammed Babur*, translated by J. Leyden and W. Erskine, Oxford, 1921, vol. 2, p. 317. The passage, which related to June, 1527, says that on the night when Bābur's party left for Agra, ‘Mir Ali Korchi was sent to Tatta to Shah Hassan’; Tatta is some fifty miles East of Karachi. It goes on to say that Shah Hassan was ‘very fond of ganjifa’, and had asked for some packs, which Bābur sent to him.

odd that as many as three Second Viceroys had been lost at one time or another. However, since it is quite apparent that, originally, the court cards of the primary pack had no lower inscriptions giving their rank and suit, and since the cards now inscribed as the Viceroys of Swords and Polo-Sticks bear nothing that could possibly have served as an emblem to mark their rank, we may regard it as virtually certain that these cards originally served as the 9 and the Ace of their respective suits. Moreover, although the present Viceroy of Coins does bear a decorative design that could conceivably have been an indication of its rank, this is not at all the same as that which appears on the Viceroy of Cups (and, in a smaller form, on the Second Viceroy of Cups); it also differs from the Viceroy of Cups in having only one suit-sign instead of two. It is therefore very probable that this card was originally the Ace of Coins. A plausible further guess is that, just as the 9 of Swords, as bearing an upper inscription, was pressed into service as the Viceroy of Swords, so the original 10 of Swords was converted into the Second Viceroy, requiring the 9 and 10 of that suit to be borrowed from another pack. If we make all these suppositions, it follows that the cards which needed in the first place to be supplied, either by direct borrowing or by converting an existing card and then borrowing to replace it, were the Viceroy and Second Viceroy of each of the suits of Coins, Swords and Polo-Sticks. (On this supposition, subsequent loss must account for the absence of the primary 6 of Coins and 2 of Swords, a secondary Ace of Coins to replace the converted one, and the primary 10 of Swords converted into a Second Viceroy. Mayer reported the presence of a very damaged and unidentifiable card, which does not appear to have been seen since. The 4 and 10 of Coins have turned up since Mayer examined the pack.)

Now it is too much of a coincidence to suppose that it was just the two lower court cards of three of the suits that happened to be lost. We are virtually driven to the conclusion that they were not present in the original pack at all, but were added later, in a rather clumsy way, when a change of fashion had brought in 52-card packs with three court cards in each suit. This would give us, slightly oddly, a pack originally composed of 46 cards, with three court cards in the Cups suit, but only one in each of the other three suits. Bizarre as this may seem, it might explain the absence of upper inscriptions on any of the numeral cards of the Cups suit: originally, there were upper inscriptions on the top three cards – the court cards – of this thirteen-card suit, and on the top four cards – the King and the three leading numeral cards – of each of the other, eleven-card, suits. Another explanation is indeed thinkable. This is that the pack, in its original state, comprised only 44 cards, with only one court card in each suit, and that the work of supplementing it was undertaken in the first place by the original artist, or by one skilled enough accurately to imitate its style, who died before completing more than the two additional court cards of the Cups suit. On this supposition, the plan of the painter who made the Viceroy and Second Viceroy of Cups, to indicate the rank of the new court cards by emblems in the same way as had originally been done for the Kings, was abandoned after his death, and the less subtle method of inscribing their rank and suit adopted. Since the Islamic cards introduced into Europe in about 1375 must have had three court cards in each suit, this might suggest that the primary pack was originally made somewhat earlier, say in the first half of the fourteenth century; but I hesitate to challenge Mayer's expert judgment assigning it, on stylistic grounds, to the fifteenth. That the expansion of this particular pack to one containing three court cards in each suit might have been undertaken under Turkish auspices could be suspected in the light of the fact that the lower inscriptions, giving rank and suit, on the (primary) Viceroy and Second Viceroy of Cups are preceded, respectively, by the words *Qushqulī* and *Qarājā*, said by Mayer to be Turkish personal names, and the fact that the lower inscriptions on the (secondary) Second Viceroys of Coins and Polo-Sticks are in ungrammatical Arabic, omitting the article before the suit-name (the equivalent of writing, say, 'Jack Hearts'). There is, however, no other evidence known of the use of playing cards by the Turks in mediaeval times. In any case, it is clear that the Istanbul pack has not yet yielded up all its secrets.

We have left the realm of solidly-based deduction and entered that of speculation. This much seems certain: that the 52-card Mamlūk pack and the 96-card Persian and Indian one must be connected, and that neither can have been immediately derived from the other. On the face of it, there are two possibilities. One is that the regular pack was invented in India, perhaps in a twelve- or ten-suited form, and that, from this, every other form of the regular pack was ultimately derived. On this hypothesis, the pack was reduced to eight suits by the Muslims in India, travelled from the Moghul court to Persia, and was then further reduced to a 48-card, four-suited, form in Syria or Egypt, later expanded to a 52-card pack by the addition of an extra court card. The alternative is that already suggested: an archetypal 48-card pack, spreading from Persia westwards to Egypt, where it was increased to 52 cards, while, in its Persian homeland, the number of suits was subsequently doubled to yield the 96-card pack, which then later spread to India. On this latter hypothesis, the ten- and twelve-suited Hindu packs would be the result of a yet further expansion of the pack that took place in India. This second hypothesis need not involve that Persia was actually the birthplace of the regular pack: it could have arrived there from some other area again, say somewhere in Central Asia, perhaps originally in a 44-card form with the King as the only court card.

The crucial question concerning Indian playing cards thus comes to be whether the eight-suited Muslim pack is a demythologised form of the larger Hindu packs, or whether the latter are Hinduised versions of it. On the first alternative, playing cards were indigenous to India, and were transformed by the Muslims, encountering them there, into a type palatable to themselves and stripped of the Hindu iconography they would have found offensive. To accept this alternative would therefore be to embrace the first of the two hypotheses outlined above. On the second alternative, playing cards were introduced into India by the Muslims, and later adapted by the Hindus to forms employing a more congenial symbolism: to accept this alternative is to embrace the second of our two hypotheses.

Highly relevant to this question is a celebrated passage in the *A'in-i Akbarī* of Abu Fazl 'Allami which forms the earliest known Indian reference to playing cards.[79] In this, Akbar is first described as having used a twelve-suited pack with which to play card games. This pack is said, vaguely, to have come down from 'ancient sages'. Its twelve suits are listed in detail: they do not correspond to those of any otherwise known form of pack. The iconography of this pack is largely secular, but it seems to contain both Hindu and Muslim elements, as the King of one suit is said to be the Hindu god Indra, and that of another to be King Solomon. The passage then goes on to describe alterations to the pack said to have been instigated by Akbar himself. This is always interpreted to mean that he reduced the number of suits from twelve to eight, although the passage reads, rather, as though he merely substituted different suits for the last eight of the twelve-suited pack. There is, however, very good reason for the usual interpretation, since the suits whose invention is ascribed to Akbar correspond exactly to those of the standard eight-suited form that were listed earlier. Since, however, we know that Ahlī Shīrāzī, who died twenty years before Akbar, at the age of fourteen, came to the throne, wrote a poem about the 96-card pack with just these suits, we can be certain that the claim that Akbar invented them is without justification. The evidential value of the passage for the theory that the eight-suited pack arose from a reduction of the number of suits in an indigenous Indian twelve-suited pack is therefore slight. We may, indeed, conclude that, in the second half of the sixteenth century, a twelve-suited pack was known in India, and was of reputed antiquity; but this does not help greatly to solve our problem.

There simply does not seem at present to be enough evidence to settle the question definitely one way or the other; there is only, as it seems to me, a slight but significant tilt in the balance of probabilities. The evidence for a Hindu origin of playing cards is extremely weak. One writer on the subject, Shastri, reports a tradition that the Vishnupur variety of the *Dasavatāra* pack was invented by the Malla kings of Vishnupur (the Malla dynasty ended in 1201), and supports this tradition on the ground that the Buddha incarnation of Vishnu is not given its orthodox place in the list of incarnations;[80] but traditions about the invention of playing cards exist everywhere (they are plentiful in France, for example), and, as Fausta Nowotny has pointed out, there is not really any ordering of the suits, and hence of the incarnations, in the pack.[81]

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[79] Abu Fazl 'Allami, *A'in-i Akbari*, translated by H. Blochman, Calcutta, 1873, vol. I, pp. 306-8.

[80] Haraprasad Shastri, 'Note on Visnupur Circular Cards', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. LXIV, 1895, part I, pp. 284-5.

[81] Fausta Nowotny, 'Die indischen Spielkarten des

Another writer, Clerk, states bluntly that the pack was invented in the seventh century or earlier, without giving any evidence.[82] In fact, however, we can see quite easily that the *Dasavatāra* pack cannot have been the original form of Indian playing-card pack, since, in a pack in which the highest card of each suit represents one of the incarnations of Vishnu, the Minister is iconographically quite superfluous; an incarnation of God obviously does not have a Prime Minister, and no one would think of including one unless he were making a somewhat forced adaptation of a different idea. Clearly the general form of this pack was determined by the need to follow the model of other packs in which each suit was headed by a King and his Minister; this supposition is clinched by the fact that the highest card is often called, not *avatāra*, but *rāja*. Rosenfeld has on several occasions argued that playing cards were originally derived from Indian four-handed chess, a thesis advanced by others before him. The theory has the considerable merit of providing some explanation for the invention of the regular pack; of why (in forms known outside India!) it has four suits, and of why each suit is divided into court cards (corresponding to the King and the major pieces) and numeral cards (corresponding to the Pawns).[83] The explanation thus provided does not, indeed, seem very convincing. Chess and card games work on quite different principles: in particular, in chess all the pieces of one colour belong to one player, whereas there is no card game in which each player is assigned all the cards of some one suit. To this it may be replied that pieces used in one game may be adapted for use in a quite different game: but here the correspondence between the chess pieces and the cards seems exceedingly shaky. Not only do we not know of any indigenous type of Indian playing-card pack with only four suits; but, in Indian four-handed chess, each player has a King, three major pieces and four (undifferentiated) Pawns, whereas, in every indigenous type of playing-card pack, each suit has a King and only one other court card, and ten, differentiated, numeral cards. (Again, we must make an exception for the Chad packs of Mysore, which are late and of no historical importance.) Some writers supply an answer to this objection by simply inventing the type of pack which, on their theory, ought to have existed: thus Bachmann, an earlier adherent of the theory that would have playing cards to have been derived from chess, alleges that there was an early form of Indian pack, with 120 cards, called the Chaturanga (i.e. chess) pack, a statement that appears quite groundless.[84] Rosenfeld himself has put the theory to use to explain, not merely the origin of the regular pack, but of the very idea of playing cards, in the generic sense: he states that early Indian chess pieces were circular, with figures painted on the top, so that they needed only to be made flatter to take the form of Indian playing cards.[85] This statement, too, appears to be without foundation. Chinese chessmen indeed have this form, save that they bear, not pictorial designs, but written names, but neither of the great historians of chess, Antônius van der Linde and H.J.R. Murray, makes any allusion to such round chessmen in India; certainly, by the time that chess spread from India to Persia, the pieces were like modern European ones, save that they were more abstract in design.

The theory that Indian playing cards developed from chess pieces should be set aside as baseless. For the rest, we have no direct evidence that playing cards were known at all in India before the sixteenth century; but, then, we have no direct evidence that they were known in Persia before that century. The riddle of the origin of the regular pack remains unresolved: there is no proof or disproof of either of our two

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Museums für Völkerkunde in Wien', *Archiv für Völkerkunde*, vol. II, 1947, pp. 1-26.

[82] S.I. Clerk, 'The art of ganjifa cards', *Modern Review*, vol. 66, 1946, Calcutta, pp. 435-6.

[83] See the articles cited in footnote 34.

[84] Kurt Bachmann, *Die Spielkarte, ihre Geschichte in 15 Jahrhunderten*, Altenburg, 1932, p. 7. When writing this booklet, Bachmann was an adherent of the theory of the origin of playing cards in the ninth century in what is now Sinkiang, a theory first propounded by Engelbert Huber in his 'Zur Kulturgeschichte der Spielkarten', *Festschrift zum 12. Skatkongress in Altenburg, Thüringen*, Altenburg, 1928, pp. 17-32, and one that appears to be a complete fantasy. Bachmann later embraced the theory of an Indian origin. In articles expounding this belief, 'Zur Entwicklung der Spielkarten und der Kartenspiele und deren Beziehungen zur Skatstadt Altenburg (Thür.)', in *Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft und Volkskunde: Festschrift für Ernst Ochs*, ed. Karl Friedrich Müller, Lahr, 1951, pp. 308-73, and 'Neue Forschungsergebnisse zur ältesten Geschichte der Spielkarten und des Kartenspieles in Asien und Europa', *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, 26. Jahrgang, Heft 5/6, 1950, pp. 63-8, he reiterated the assertion concerning the Chaturanga pack.

[85] This statement is also to be found in Bachmann.

hypotheses; either involves assumptions we have no way of justifying. If the regular pack was invented in India, perhaps in a twelve-suited form, and so passed to Persia and then to the Arab world, suffering in the process a reduction in the number of suits first to eight and then to four, we cannot place its invention any later than the early thirteenth century if we are to allow time for these developments. But, equally, the alternative theory, that the eight-suited pack was introduced from Persia to India by the Muslims, and that the Hindu forms, with yet more suits, were a later development, involves assuming the previous existence in Persia of a 48-card four-suited pack of which all trace has vanished. But if we have to choose between the two theories, the latter seems to me preferable. For one thing, the theory of the Indian origin of the regular pack involves that the generic idea of playing cards was invented twice over, in India and in China; although such independent inventions do occur, it is better not to postulate them without necessity. For another, the word *ganjifa*, used throughout India for playing cards of the indigenous kind and for the games played with them, appears to be borrowed from Persian and therefore suggests that it was through Persian influence that playing cards first came to India; the same appears to hold good of many of the terms used in the game.

The theory of the Indian invention of the regular pack also entails the independent invention, twice over, of trick-taking games. The category of trick-taking games does not occupy the dominant position among Chinese card games that it does among European ones. Most Chinese card games, other than pure gambling games, belong to one or the other of two categories that have played a comparatively minor role in the history of the European card games. One is the category of draw-and-discard games, of which Ma Jong is only one of many examples. The fundamental principle is that each player in turn draws one card from the stock or from the preceding player's discard, and then discards one card, face up: the winner is the player who first forms a hand wholly composed of certain special combinations of cards. Ma Jong happens to be the one Chinese game of this type that has attained popularity in the West (and in Japan as well): but there is an immense variety of such games in China, played with domino cards, chess cards and money cards as well as with Ma Jong tiles; the great Vietnamese game of *t'ổ-tôm*, played with a Vietnamese version of the money pack, is also of this type. The draw-and-discard principle will be familiar to every card player today in Europe or the Americas as that underlying all the games of the vast Rummy family (save that, in Rummy games, it is often lawful for a player to 'go out', bringing play in that round to an end, before obtaining a hand wholly composed of the relevant combinations, i.e. sequences and threes and fours of a kind). Indeed, all Western draw-and-discard games belong to the Rummy family and are thus connected to one another by descent.[86] The surprising fact is, however, that it is only in the present century that the draw-and-discard principle has become known to most European card players: when W.H. Wilkinson, in 1891, induced the British cardmaking firm of Charles Goodall to issue a special pack of cards to play the game of Khanhoo, adapted from a Chinese draw-and-discard game played with the three-suited money pack, he was able to write in the accompanying booklet of rules, 'The principle of this old game is hardly known in the West.' It seems likely that games of the Rummy type were played in Spain in the nineteenth century; but if so, they never achieved any prominence there, and, with the possible exception of Portugal, did not spread to other European countries. Nowadays Rummy games are popular all over

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[86] The kind of draw that occurs in Poker is *not* an example of what is here meant by 'the draw-and-discard principle': only confusion results from calling Poker and As Nas 'rummy games', as is done by Alan Wykes, loc. cit. In games of the Poker type, there is usually at most one draw and discard; more than one card may be discarded at a time, and the corresponding number drawn; the discard precedes the draw; and the discard is made face down, other players not having the opportunity to claim an opponent's discard instead of drawing from the stock. As the draw-and-discard priniple is here being understood, the following features are essential: at his turn, each player draws and discards only one card, and must do so as long as play continues; he discards after drawing, not before; he discards face up, and an opponent has the option of taking his last discard instead of drawing from the stock, at least if he can make a scoring combination with it; and play continues in this manner, in rotation, until one player 'goes out'. Poker would be tame under a system of fixed scores for winning combinations: its interest lies in the choice the players have whether to raise, stay in or drop out. This is not at all true of draw-and-discard games, in which there is almost always a fixed schedule of payments, depending either on the hand of the player going out, or on those of his opponent or opponents, or both.

Europe, many countries having developed their own national form: but they originally arrived as an importation from the United States in the period after 1910 and particularly in the 1920s, a new wave of invaders arriving from South America in the 1950s in the form of the Canasta games, a branch of the Rummy family.

The form from which all other Rummy games have derived was one known in the United States as Cooncan: this was a two-handed game played with a 40-card pack, omitting the 8s, 9s and 10s, and treating the Jack as consecutive to the 7; a player could take his opponent's discard only if he could make a sequence or set with it, play ended only when one player, without making a final discard, had disposed of all of his cards in sequences or sets of three or four of a kind, and there was a simple score for thus going out, unaffected by the cards remaining in the opponent's hand. Cooncan was first described in print in 1897 by R.F. Foster in the first edition of his *Foster's Complete Hoyle*, under the name Conquian;[87] he, too, remarked that it was a game 'quite different from any other in its principles'. According to Foster, it had been popular in the South-Western States since about 1860.[88] In 1900, Foster published an article about it in a New York paper,[89] and remarked later that the letters from correspondents which it provoked showed that the game was gradually becoming known in the Eastern United States. On Foster's account, the next development took place in about 1908 'somewhere in the West'; the game was adapted for four players, using the full 52-card pack, and the new form was named 'Rum' or 'Rummy'. Foster published another newspaper article about this variation,[90] which was reprinted in several English papers; the game was taken up in England with even more enthusiasm than in the United States, and Foster reports that by 1912 the Bath Club in London was playing it with two full packs and two Jokers, and had printed a set of rules for that form.[91] The variations called Poker Rum and Poker Gin, the latter being the game later immensely popular as Gin Rummy, were described by Foster in the 1914 edition of his *Complete Hoyle*; I do not know if he was the first to describe them, but they cannot have been invented long before.[92] Their names do not indicate any derivation from Poker, but were based on a faint analogy: their novelty consisted in the fact that a player's sequences and sets were not revealed until the final show-down.

Foster stated that Cooncan had entered the United States from Mexico, its name being a corruption of the Mexican name 'Conquián'. Almost all American authorities, for instance Geoffrey Mott-Smith and A.A. Ostrow, have accepted Foster's account of the historical origin and development of Rummy.[93] We are indeed fortunate that so careful an observer recorded that development at the very time it was taking place.[94] The origin of Conquián itself remains something of a mystery. Most card games played in Mexico are of Spanish origin, and the presumption is that this is true of Conquián also; but I know of no direct evidence for Conquián's having been played in Spain. The Spanish-playing-card manufacturers, Heraclio Fournier, issue two booklets, *Juegos de naipes españoles* and *Juegos de naipes extranjeros,* two Rummy games being included in the former under the names of Remigio or Rabino and Chinchón. The non-Spanish origin of Remigio is evidenced by its being played with 52 cards; Fournier even put out a hybrid 52-card Spanish-suited pack, with English indices (the Caballo thus bearing the index 'Q'), for playing Rummy and Poker. Chinchón, on the other hand, is played with a 40- or 48-card pack, and thus may antedate the Rummy invasion from the United States. Conquián is closer to the Chinese draw-and-discard games than are the later forms of Rummy; but it is hard to be sure whether the draw-and-discard principle was invented independently in Mexico or in Spain, or whether it was originally derived from Chinese games. If the former, Conquián may be of Mexican rather than of Spanish origin, and in either case may not have been invented before the nineteenth century.[95] If the basic principle of the game was derived from China, the Spaniards may have learned it from the Portuguese, probably in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Even in the latter case, it is plain that the idea did not make much impact on card play in the Iberian peninsula, and none anywhere else in Europe, until Rummy went into a nova state in the early years of this century. The fact that, until the present century, European card players were almost entirely ignorant of the draw-and-discard principle, the basis of an enormous number of Chinese card games, corroborates our earlier conclusion that it was not through direct Chinese influence that playing cards entered Europe.

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[87] Pp. 448-52. The next account, under the name Coon Can, seems to have been in *The Standard Hoyle*, New York, 1899, pp. 502-3.

[88] R.F. Foster, *Cooncan (Conquián): a Game of Cards also called 'Rum'*, New York, 1913, p. ix.

[89] The New York *Sun* for 23 December 1900.

[90] The New York *Sun* for 10 September 1911.

[91] All this will be found in R.F. Foster, *Cooncan (Conquián)*, New York, 1913, p. x.

[92] *Foster's Complete Hoyle*, 1914, pp. 691-2. A.H. Morehead and G. Mott-Smith, *Hoyle's Rules of Games*, 20th edition, New York, 1962, p. 113, date the invention of Gin Rummy to 1909, which seems rather early, if Foster's dating of the invention of 52-card Rummy is correct; they ascribe it to Elwood T. Baker, of New York.

[93] See, e.g., A.H. Morehead and G. Mott-Smith, op. cit., p. 103. The story, found in some sources, e.g. Richard L. Frey, *According to Hoyle*, New York, 1963, p. 78, that the name 'Rum' was originally adopted in England, is at variance with Foster's account, and is almost certainly wrong.

[94] The one dissentient voice is that of John Scarne. He denies that Rummy is derived from Cooncan, which he writes 'Coon Can'; he further maintains that the name 'Conquián' is a corruption of 'Coon Can', rather than vice-versa, and that the game itself originated in the United States. Despite Scarne's sneers at Albert Morehead and A.A. Ostrow, the derivation of Rummy from Cooncan is hardly to be called a hypothesis: it is plain to see in the record provided by the card-game books. As already stated, Conquián was first described by Foster in 1897, and Scarne observes that, as Cooncan, it appeared in an American *Hoyle* of 1900; the form for three or four players using a 52-card pack, was first described, under the name 'Rum', in Foster's newspaper article of 1911, the U.S. Playing-Card Company shortly afterwards issuing a set of rules for it under the same name. Scarne triumphantly cites the description of Whiskey Poker from the American *Hoyle* of 1875 as revealing the true ancestor of Rummy (*Scarne on Cards*, New York, 1955, p. 37). Foster was well aware of Whiskey Poker, describing it in all editions of his *Complete Hoyle*. Though, in his booklet on Cooncan or Rum, he does not mention it, he apparently thought it had played a part in the development of Rummy out of the original Cooncan, since in the 16th edition of *Official Rules of Card Games*, Cincinnati, 1912, edited by him, he included an account of Rum with the note 'This is a combination of Conquian and Whiskey Poker' (p. 15). Actually, it seems unlikely that Whiskey Poker had

The other main category of Chinese card games is that which we may label 'Fishing' games, after the name usually used for them in China. In these games, a number of cards lie face up on the table, forming a pool; if a player, at his turn, has in his hand a card matching one of those in the pool, he uses it to capture that card, setting both on one side; if he cannot make a capture, he has to contribute a card from his hand to the pool. At the end of play, each player's score is determined from the cards he has captured, according to the values of the individual cards, often with premiums in addition for having special combinations of cards among those captured. The mechanics of Chinese fishing games are always the same. At the outset, a fixed number of cards are laid out face up to form the pool, each player is dealt a hand, and the remaining cards are left face down to form the stock. At each player's turn, he first plays a card from his hand, either to make a capture, or to the pool, as already described; he

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anything to do with the matter; its resemblance to Rummy is quite superficial, and the essential principles were already present in Cooncan. Scarne quotes the 1914 edition of *Foster's Complete Hoyle,* and jeers at his derivation of the name 'Cooncan' from 'Conquián': he asserts, on the contrary, that Coon Can was created in the American South. The reason why Coon Can, 'born in Dixie', has turned up in Mexcio is 'because it has followed the American Negro wherever he goes' (p. 36). Scarne offers no evidence that it was in 'Dixie', rather than, as Foster says, in the South-West, that Cooncan was first played in the U.S.A.; moreover, 'the American Negro' has not, so far as I know, gone to Mexico very much. Scarne is obviously hinting that the name 'Coon Can' is connected with the exceedingly offensive racial epithet 'coon'. It would be incredible that black people, in the American South or elsewhere, should employ for a favourite game a name incorporating such a term; that Scarne could make so tasteless a suggestion demonstrates his utter insensitivity equally to people and to probabilities. He further comments, 'As for the game's being Spanish because played with a deck of forty cards, rubbish!', and goes on to remark that card games are played in the United States with a great variety of shortened packs. If he understood the first principles of card-game history, he would realise that this is because the U.S.A. contains immigrants from many European countries, who have brought their games with them. There are games played in France with the 32-card pack which are nevertheless of Spanish origin, although the 32-card pack is unknown in Spain; this is because the games have been adapted to the French form of shortened pack. But whenever we find, in some country, a game played with a variety of shortened pack that is generally unfamiliar in that country, but well known in certain other countries, it is a sure sign that the game originated in one of those other countries. It strains credulity past breaking point to be told that, with no influence from any Latin country, Americans chanced to invent a game in which the 8s to 10s were omitted and the 7 was treated as in sequence with the Jack, and would do so even if we did not know the game to be played in Mexico, which Scarne does not deny. The argument dismissed by Scarne as 'rubbish' is in fact conclusive as showing Foster to have been right in saying that Conquián came from Mexico to the United States and not conversely.

[95] Albert A. Ostrow, *The Complete Card Player*, New York and London, 1945, p. 540, states that Conquián is 'Spanish in origin and is said to have a history dating back at least four hundred years', but gives no authority for this.

then turns up the top card of the stock; if it matches a card in the pool, he captures that card with it, and adds both to those he was won; if not, he places it in the pool. The number of cards in the stock is always the same as the total number of cards in the players' hands taken together. A great many fishing games exist in China, played with different types of cards, and also in Japan, where they include Hachi-hachi and most other games played with the *hana fuda* (flower cards).[96] Certain games of this category are played in Europe, such as Casino, moderately well known in Britain, Scopa, immensely popular throughout Italy, Callabra, and a few others; some appear to have originated in the Middle East. The mechanics of the European games differ from those of the Chinese and Japanese ones in that there is no drawing from the stock; instead, there are repeated deals throughout the game whenever the players' hands become exhausted. Despite this difference, the analogy is recognised by the Chinese; when Casino was introduced into China in this century, it was immediately named 'Fishing', like so many indigenous games.[97] It does not appear that this category of games is very old in Europe; certainly it has played little part in the history of European card games.

Both draw-and-discard games and fishing games are played in China with every variety of playing cards: with chess cards, with money cards and with dominoes and domino cards. Trick-taking games, on the other hand, exist in far fewer numbers and do not constitute a characteristic form of Chinese card play. Despite this, one of the oldest and most celebrated of Chinese games, that of *T'ien chiu* (Heaven and Nine), which is played with dominoes by four players and goes back to at least the early twelfth century, belongs to this category.[98] This seems surprising, because dominoes do not fall naturally into suits; but, for the purpose of this game, the Chinese domino set is divided, by pure convention, into two unequal suits, the military suit and the civil suit, within each of which a conventional ranking is imposed. The game is, of course, played without trumps, but the two characteristic features of Indian and European trick-taking games both prevail: the winner of each trick leads to the next one, and a trick can be won only by a domino of the suit led. Like most European games, and unlike the Indian ones, the player who leads to a trick is subject to no constraints restricting which domino he may lead.

It is conceivable that the idea of trick-taking games was independently invented in India and in China; but it is more probable that it had a single origin. If so, then the theory of an Indian origin either of the regular pack or of playing cards in the generic sense must be finally rejected. It remains just possible that the Chinese four-suited money pack was the ultimate ancestor of the regular pack: that it spread westwards from China, acquiring on the way definite suit-signs for the upper two suits, a tenth numeral card in each suit, and first one and then two court cards.[99] Since that leaves only about a century for such an extensive evolution to have occurred, this does not seem the most likely possibility. A guess that seems to me more plausible is that, with the spread of the Chinese invention of paper, the use of the domino cards, and, with them, the idea of trick-taking games, travelled to somewhere in Central Asia, or to northern Persia, and that it was there that the idea first arose of devising a set of cards displaying a natural division into four suits in place of the artificial division into two suits imposed on the dominoes. There is no way of saying what the original suit-signs would have been. Perhaps one was a coin, and another a symbol representing a military commander of a *tümen* or unit of 10,000. Such a pack could then have spread further west, to Persia and on to Egypt and eventually to Europe, meanwhile giving place, in Persia, to the eight-suited pack which then went, with the Moghuls or with earlier Muslim rulers, to India. It could also, at the same time, have returned to China, to be adapted, by a misunderstanding or a deliberate reinterpretation of the suit-symbols, to the money pack. But here we are once more deep into the realm of speculation; as already observed, the problem of the origin of the regular pack is still a long way from being solved.

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[96] The *hana fuda* are by far the best known of the indigenous types of playing cards still used in Japan. They form a 48-card pack, divided into twelve sets of four, each set representing a month and symbolised by a flower or plant. In the fishing game played with it, a player may capture from the pool a card of a given month with another card of the same month. The origin of the pack is uncertain; a pack of the same general type, but with a greater number of cards, is to be found in the Cary Collection in the Beinecke Library at Yale University. It is at first sight puzzling that many Japanese accounts of the game state that the pack is derived from the 48-card Portuguese pack. It is, however, undoubtedly the case that playing cards were first introduced into Japan by the Portuguese, that the earliest Japanese playing cards were of the Portuguese type and that descendants of the Portuguese pack are still produced and used in Japan to this day. If we suppose that fishing games (themselves of Chinese origin) were first played in Japan with some form of the 48-card Portuguese-derived pack, a card in the pool being able to be captured by one of the same rank, it becomes intelligible that, later, a pack with the structure of the *hana fuda* pack should have been devised to play the same game, replacing the four-suited Portuguese one.

[97] I owe this information to Dr David Hawkes.

[98] On p. 66 of his 'Chinese origin of playing cards', *The American Anthropologist*, vol. VIII, 1895, pp. 61-78, W.H. Wilkinson gives a translation of a passage from the seventeenth-century dictionary *Cheng tzŭ t'ung* which, as he remarks, had often been cited by earlier Western writers who completely misinterpreted it as referring to the invention of playing cards. In this passage, it is given as a 'common legend' that in 1120 an official appealed to the Emperor for a ruling on the game of *T'ien chiu*. The passage goes on to give, as fact rather than as legend, a cursory description of the game as played at the time when the Imperial ruling was supposedly asked for. It further remarks that, in the time of Kao Tsung (1127-1163), pattern sets were issued by imperial edict, to regulate the composition of the set of tiles used for the game; 'these', it says, 'are now known throughout the Empire as *ku p'ai*', that is, as bone *p'ai* or dominoes. As Wilkinson stresses, it concludes with the warning that it should not be inferred that it was at this period that games of this kind were invented. *T'ien chiu* thus dates from at least the early twelfth century, and possibly earlier yet.

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[99] A special type of playing cards was formerly used in Korea, though they are now apparently obsolete, They are amazingly long and thin, and form a pack of 80 cards, divided into eight suits, or sometimes only of 60, divided into six suits, each consisting of nine numeral cards and a General. The suits and ranks are indicated by highly distorted characters. In the later versions of the pack, the suit-designations have disappeared, having no significance in the gambling games for which the pack was principally used. Culin considered this pack the archetypal form of the regular pack, giving rise to all others, but this must surely be dismissed as a fantasy. There is no correspondence between the names of the suits in this pack and in the Chinese money pack, and its origin must be left in obscurity; but it may be regarded as indicating that it might have been natural to add a single 'court card' to the nine numeral cards of the money pack suits. Note that in both Chinese and Korean chess, our King is replaced by a General.

CHAPTER 4

When and Where the Tarot Pack was Invented

It was formerly believed that, in Europe, the Tarot pack is as old as the regular pack. Indeed, some have thought that it is older: the assertion is still to be met with that the regular pack was originally derived from the Tarot pack by subtraction. It is clear from our study of the relations between European and Oriental cards that this latter belief must be incorrect. The regular pack came to Europe from the Islamic world, but the Tarot pack is a European invention: there is no trace of the existence in Egypt, Persia, India or China of anything in the least resembling the Tarot pack.[1] This naturally leads us to expect the Tarot pack to have appeared some time later than the introduction of playing cards into Europe: as a variant on the ordinary type of playing-card pack, it would hardly have been devised until the novelty of the latter had had time to wear off. One ground that used to be advanced for the contrary hypothesis was the belief that the word *naibi* referred to Tarot cards, while *carte*, *cartule*, etc., referred to cards of the regular pack: but this belief was conclusively refuted in 1900 by Robert Steele, who showed that Italian *naibi*, like Spanish *naipes*, was used simply to mean 'playing cards', Tarot cards being known in fifteenth-century Italian as *trionfi*.[2] More recently, Mr Jan Bauwens has claimed that a pack of playing cards recorded in the Register of Duke Wenceslas of Brabant as having been bought for the Duke and Duchess was a Tarot pack, on the ground that it contained 78 cards;[3] but a reference to the original entry reveals that neither it nor any of the numerous later similar entries contains any mention of the number of cards in the packs bought or played with, nor anything else to suggest that these were not straightforward regular packs.[4]

Much more frequently met with as an argument for an early date for the invention of the Tarot pack is that relating to a famous fragment of a fifteenth-century hand-painted Tarot pack in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris: this comprises seventeen cards, namely the Jack of Swords, the Fool and all the usual triumph cards except the Bagatto, the Popess, the Empress, the Wheel, the Devil and the Star. The Abbé Menestrier published in 1704 an entry from the account-book of King Charles VI of France recording the payment in 1392 of '56 sols parisis' to the painter Jacquemin Gringonneur for three packs of playing cards.[5] In 1842, M.C.

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[1] Once again, an exception should be made for the 'Chad' cards of Mysore. These were devised by Krishnaraj Odeyar (1794-1868) after his deposition in 1830 by the British from the throne of Mysore. Although several of the special forms of pack he devised are augmented packs, in the sense of regular packs to which additional cards, not belonging to any suit, have been added, it is obvious that so late an addition to the repertoire of Indian playing-card packs has no historical significance. See Rudolf von Leyden, *Chad: the Playing Cards of Mysore (India)*, privately produced, 1973.

[2] Robert Steele, 'A notice of the Ludus Triumphorum and some early Italian card games', *Archaeologia*, vol. 57, 1900, pp. 185-200.

[3] In a booklet accompanying a reproduction of the Mamlūk pack from Istanbul published in 1973 by S.A.R.L. Aurelia Books, of Louvain and Brussels.

[4] The entry is cited in A. Pinchart, *Recherches sur les cartes à jouer et leur fabrication en Belgique*, Brussels, 1870.

[5] Menestrier, 'Des Principes des sciences et des arts disposés en forme de jeux', *Bibliothèque curieuse et instructive de divers ouvrages anciens et modernes de littérature et des arts*, vol. II, Trévoux, 1704, p. 174.

Leber proposed that the cards in the Bibliothèque Nationale came from one of the packs painted by Gringonneur;[6] and this opinion won such wide acceptance that the cards came to be known as the 'Tarots de Charles VI'. If this were correct, they would be by far the oldest surviving Tarot cards; and, not only should we have to say that the Tarot pack came into existence within two decades of the arrival of playing cards in Europe, but France would appear to have a better claim to have been the country of their origin than Italy. In fact, however, there is no shred of evidence to connect the Bibliothèque Nationale pack with Gringonneur: Chatto,[7] Merlin[8] and D'Allemagne[9] all ascribe the cards to Italian workmanship. W.L. Schreiber is very specific, assigning them to Ferrara in the third quarter of the fifteenth century.[10]

Another piece of evidence cited in a great many books and articles on playing cards was first presented by Count Leopoldo Cicognara in his book of 1831:[11] a portrait in Bologna, bearing the inscription 'Francesco Antelminelli Castracani Fibbia, Prince of Pisa, Montegiori and Pietra Santa, and lord of Fusecchio, son of Giovanni, a native of Castruccio, Duke of Lucca, Pistoia, Pisa, having fled to Bologna and presented himself to Bentivogli, was made Generalissimo of the Bolognese armies, and was the first of this family, which was called in Bologna "dalle Fibbie". He married Francesca, daughter of Giovanni Bentivogli. Inventor of the game of Tarocchino in Bologna, he had from the XIV Reformatories the privilege of placing the Fibbia arms on the Queen of Batons and those of his wife on the Queen of Coins. Born in the year 1360, he died in the year 1419.' On the strength of this inscription, Count Cicognara named Castracani Fibbia as the inventor of the game of *tarocchi*. Commenting on this, Carlo Lozzi cited with approval an entirely just observation by L. Zdekauer that the inscription does not attribute to Fibbia the invention of the game of *tarocchi* in general, but only of that particular variety of it known as *tarocchino* and peculiar to Bologna.[12] As we shall see, the diminutive ending relates to the use in this variant game of a shortened pack, in which the 2 to 5 are omitted from every suit. Quite evidently, such a shortened pack must be derived from the full 78-card pack, and not the other way around, so that, if Francesco Fibbia really had invented the *tarocchino* pack some time before his death in 1419, the ordinary Tarot pack from which it was derived must have been in existence for a certain period before that: hence, if the inscription is to be believed, the Tarot pack must have been devised by 1400 at the very latest.

Doubt was cast upon the very existence of this painting by Robert Steele in his article of 1900,[13] and in this he was followed by Miss Gertrude Moakley in her book.[14] However, in another article written in the very next year, Steele acknowledged its existence, speaking of 'the famous inscription on the portrait of Castracani Fibbia' and stating that 'the portrait is now in the Palazzo Pallavicini in Bologna'.[15] It is not to Steele's credit that, in this article, he did not mention and withdraw his accusation against Count Cicognara. The existence of the portrait was confirmed by G.B. Comelli in an article of 1909.[16] It is somewhat surprising that doubt about a point so relatively easily investigated should have been allowed to persist for so long.[17]

In fact, the portrait does exist, and tallies completely with Count Cicognara's description of it, including the inscription. It is, however, far from being contemporary with its subject; by its style, it is to be assigned to the seventeenth century, and probably to the second half of that century. As recorded by Count Cicognara, it shows Prince Fibbia holding a pack of *tarocco bolognese* cards, some of which are falling to the floor: among them can be seen the Queen of Batons, bearing the Fibbia arms, and the Queen of Coins, bearing the Bentivoglio arms. The inscription is as quoted by Cicognara; but it appears that the original inscription was painted over and a new version painted on top, the original one having lacked the sentence ascribing to Prince Fibbia the invention of *tarocchino* and recording the privilege granted to him of placing his arms and those of his wife on the two Queens. The sentence may have been added to explain the presence of the playing cards in the picture.[18]

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[6] M.C. Leber, 'Études historiques sur les cartes à jouer', *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de France*, new series, vol. 6, 1842, pp. 256-348.

[7] William Andrew Chatto, *Facts and Speculations on the Origins and History of Playing Cards*, London, 1848.

[8] R. Merlin, *L'Origine des cartes à jouer: Recherches nouvelles sur les naibis, les tarots et sur les autres espèces de cartes*, Paris, 1869.

[9] Henry-Réné D'Allemagne, *Les Cartes à jouer du XIVe au XXe siècle*, two volumes, Paris, 1906.

[10] W.L. Schreiber, *Die ältesten Spielkarten*, Strasbourg 1937, p. 101.

[11] Leopoldo Cicognara, *Memorie Spettanti alla Storia della Calcografia*, Prato, 1831.

[12] Carlo Lozzi, 'Le Antiche Carte da Giuoco', *La Bibliofilia*, vol. 1, 1899-1900, pp. 37-46.

[13] R. Steele, op. cit.

[14] Gertrude Moakley, *The Tarot Cards Painted by Bonifacio Bembo for the Visconti-Sforza Family*, New York, 1966.

[15] Robert Steele, 'Early playing cards, their design and decoration', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, vol. 49, 1900-1901, pp. 317-23; see p. 319.

[16] G.B. Comelli, 'Il Governo "Misto" in Bologna dal 1507 al 1797 e le Carte da Giuoco del can. Montieri', *Atti e Memorie della Reale Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Provincie della Romagna*, series 3, vol. 27, 1909; see p. 3.

[17] See M. Dummett, 'A note on Cicognara', *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. II, no. 1, August 1973, pp. 14-17 (original issue), pp. 23-32 (reissue), and 'More about Cicognara', ibid., vol. V, no. 2, November 1976, pp. 26-34.

A *tarocco bolognese* pack in the British Museum, probably dating between 1725 and 1750, bears out the statement that, in some such packs, the Queen of Batons bore the Fibbia arms and the Queen of Coins those of the Bentivoglio family. The portrait testifies to the existence, in the seventeenth century, of a local tradition. But, because of its late date, its evidential value is slight; in view of the lack of any other evidence for the existence of the shortened *tarocco bolognese* pack before the sixteenth century, the tradition is unlikely to be sound. As we have seen, it was not until the sixteenth century that the practice of playing various card games with shortened packs came into fashion; it is therefore probable that it was in that century that the shortened *tarocco* pack used in Bologna was first devised. The most likely explanation is that the reason for putting the Fibbia arms on one of the cards had been forgotten, and that the story about Francesco Fibbia was invented as a hypothesis to account for it.

We have successively rejected the years 1377 (on the *naibi* argument), 1379, 1392 and 1419 as bounds for the date of the invention of the Tarot pack: one that cannot be shaken is the year 1442. In that year there is a reference in the *Registro dei Mandati* for the court of Ferrara to *pare uno de carte da trionfi*, and, in the *Registro di Guardaroba*, one to the purchase of *quattro paia di carticelle da trionfi*.[19] As was remarked above, the word *trionfi*, or the phrase *carte da trionfi*, is the ordinary fifteenth-century Italian term for Tarot cards, while, as in early English sources, the word 'pair' (*paro* or *paio*) was often used to mean 'pack'. Evidently, then, by 1442, at least in the d'Este court at Ferrara, Tarot cards were well known and in some demand.

That this was also so in Milan may be inferred from a mural painting known as 'The Tarocchi Players' in the Casa Borromeo in that city. It forms one of a set of three, in the International Gothic style, on the walls of a small ground-floor room (now used as an office), showing young men and women of the nobility engaged in various games. There is no agreement over which artist painted these delightful pictures, but they are generally dated to the early 1440s. Every writer on art who mentions these paintings refers to the one in which we are interested as 'The Tarocchi Players', so that this identification of its subject must rest on a very firm tradition. There is nothing in the paintings as it is now to show whether the five people depicted are playing a game with Tarot cards or with a regular pack; one can see the pattern on the backs of the cards, but although the faces of two of the cards must originally have been shown, no details of these can any longer be seen. It is evident, however, that the condition of the painting has greatly deteriorated during the present century. A black-and-white photograph of it appears in a book of 1926,[20] and shows details that have now vanished. As far as I can see from this photograph, the card that has just been played by the lady in the middle of the group is the 2 of Coins, while the man on her right is playing the Ace of Coins; this, of course, does not help us to decide whether they are playing with Tarot cards or not. However, it also looks from the photograph as though the ladies at the two ends of the group have each put a card face up in front of them on the table, and that these are picture cards: if so, all trace of these cards has since disappeared from the painting. I have not been able to identify these cards from the photograph; but it is possible that, when the painting was in a better state of preservation, one or other of them could be seen to be a triumph card, the Matto or a Queen, thus justifying the particularisation of the game depicted as one played with Tarot cards; if that were not so, it is difficult to see why the painting should have acquired its name. Signor Vito Arienti has informed me that there is another fifteenth-century painting of players of *tarocchi* in a castle in the Val d'Aosta. He may have been referring to a painting in the castle of Issogne, showing people playing various games, including three playing cards, and dating from 1470. From the illustration I have seen, in Giulio Brochard, *Valle d'Aosta*, ed. Renato Willien, Novara, 1968, p. 76 (see also pp. 91-2), it is not evident that the cards being used are Tarot cards; in any case, it is too late to have any bearing on the date of origin of the game.

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[18] The portrait can be seen at the palazzo Fibbia, 14, via Galliera, Bologna. I am indebted for its location to the kind help of Signor Giancarlo Roversi, an expert on the history of the city. The palazzo was formerly known as the palazzo Felicini-Calzolari; in Sandro Chierichetti, *Bologna*, Bologna, n.d., p. 111, it is stated to have been built in 1497. It was referred to by Count Cicognara as the 'casa Fibbia', and was said by Comelli in the article cited above to have passed from the Fibbia to the Fabbri family, and from them to the Pallavicini; the casual remark by Steele, cited in the text, should not mislead anyone into looking for the painting at the palazzo Pallavicini, 45, via S. Stefano. The owner of the palazzo Fibbia kindly allowed my friend Signor Marco Santambrogio, a lecturer in the Philosophy Department at the University of Bologna, not only to examine, but also to photograph, the painting; the great hall in which it hangs is now occupied by the Associazione Artigiani, who were also most co-operative. I owe my information about the painting entirely to the assiduous work of Signor Santambrogio. In his *The Encyclopedia of Tarot* (New York, 1978), p. 33, Stuart R. Kaplan cites my article 'More about Cicognara', saying that I there describe the 'rediscovery' of the portrait by Signor Santambrogio. The quotation marks are Mr Kaplan's, and suggest a direct quotation from my article, but in fact I did not use the word 'rediscovery', and claimed nothing so portentous on Signor Santambrogio's behalf. The painting was never lost, but, ever since Cicognara first described it, has remained continuously just where he said it was. Robert Steele, in his article of 1900, and, misled by him, Miss Moakley in 1966 expressed unjust doubts whether it existed; but, since neither of them, at the time of writing, had actually looked for it, this hardly counts as the painting's being lost. There is in the British Museum a complete Tarocco Bolognese pack by the maker who used the trade-name 'al Mondo'. In this pack, Moors replace the *Papi*, so it must be dated after 1725 (see Chapter 16); it exemplifies the standard pattern, in a single-ended form and without numerals on the trumps, and is probably to be dated to about 1750. This pack displays the feature mentioned in the inscription on the Fibbia portrait: the Queen of Coins holds a shield with the Bentivoglio arms and the Queen of Batons one with the Fibbia arms. The pack is I-37 in F.M. O'Donoghue, *Catalogue of the Playing Cards bequeathed to the Trustees of the British Museum by the late Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, London, 1901.

[19] See G. Bertoni, 'Tarocchi versificati', *Poesie leggende costumanze del medio evo*, Modena, 1917, p. 218, fn. 3, and G. Campori, 'Le carte da gioco dipinte per gli Estensi nel sec. XV', *Atti e Memorie delle Deputazioni di Storia Patria per le Provincie modenesi e parmensi*, vol. 7, 1874, p. 126.

A great many playing cards have come down to us from fifteenth-century Italy. Of these, many are sumptuous hand-painted cards made for the nobility. The surviving cards of this kind come from about twenty different packs: it is difficult to give a precise figure, since some cards in different collections may originally have belonged to the same pack. There are nine such packs of which more than ten cards survive: the surviving cards of eight of these nine packs include, in each case, at least one triumph card and at least one suit card, so that these eight packs were certainly Tarot packs. The three most complete of these packs are attributed, in the unanimous opinion of present-day art historians, to the Cremonese painter Bonifacio Bembo, who was born about 1420 or a little earlier and died in about 1480. Bembo is known to have executed several important commissions for Francesco Sforza, who became Duke of Milan in 1450 and died in 1466, and for his successor Galeazzo Maria Sforza, who died in 1476. On the strength of the heraldic emblems and mottoes appearing on many of the cards of these three packs, it is evident that they were made for Francesco Sforza or, in the case of the first two, for his predecessor Filippo Maria Visconti, who died in 1447. They are as follows.

(1) The earliest is that usually known as the Visconti di Modrone pack, from the name of its former owner; it is now in the Beinecke Library at Yale University. Sixty-seven cards survive, of which eleven are triumph cards and fifty-six are suit cards. In the Batons suit, the numeral cards show arrows instead of the usual staves, although the court cards show staves, in the usual form of polished staffs. On the numeral cards, both the Batons and the Swords intersect, but the Swords are straight. Because the composition both of the court cards and of the triumphs show certain unusual features, they will be discussed in detail below.

(2) Probably the next in date is that known as the Brambilla pack, also called after a former owner, now in the Brera Gallery in Milan. Forty-eight cards survive, of which only two – the Emperor and the Wheel of Fortune – are triumphs, the remaining forty-six being suit cards. Here the numeral cards show ordinary Batons, while the court cards of that suit have arrows: Batons and Swords both intersect on the numeral cards, but the Swords are curved in the usual Italian manner.

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[20] Raimond van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, vol. 7, the Hague, 1926, p. 145, fig. 91.

(3) The most complete of all the early hand-painted packs is that usually called the Visconti-Sforza pack, divided between the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo and the private collection of the Colleoni family in the same city. Of this, as many as seventy-four cards survive altogether, comprising the Fool, nineteen triumphs and fifty-four suit cards. All the Batons are of the usual type, and intersect, as do the Swords, which are, however, straight, as in the Visconti di Modrone pack. The subjects on the triumph cards are standard ones, of which only the Devil and the Tower are missing. Six of them, however – Temperance, Fortitude, the Star, the Moon, the Sun and the World – are quite obviously by a different artist, and are thought to have been painted some twenty years later, by an unknown artist of the Ferrarese school.[21] This particular pack, or individual cards belonging to it, appears to have served as a model for the painters of more than one later pack.

The remaining six packs comprising more than ten surviving cards are as follows.

(4) The most famous early Tarot pack of all is the so-called Charles VI pack in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, already mentioned. This comprises seventeen cards, of which only one, the Jack of Swords, is a suit card: the rest consist of the Fool and fifteen triumph cards, making up all the standard subjects other than the Bagatto, the Empress, the Popess, the Wheel of Fortune, the Devil and the Star. The vivid, florid style differs completely both from that of Bembo and from that of the unknown painter of the six later cards in the Visconti-Sforza set; expert opinion, however, assigns the pack to the same date and place as the latter, namely to Ferrara in about 1470.

(5) The most complete set other than the three by Bembo is one in the Rothschild Collection in the Louvre, consisting of thirty-one cards. It is generally accepted that a single card, a Cavalier of Swords, in the Museo Civico at Bassano also belongs to this pack, bringing the total to thirty-two. Despite a slight divergence in the measurements cited for this card (190 x 90 mm. as against 188 x 90 for the Rothschild ones), this identification can scarcely be doubted: not only the general style, but the border design, the overrunning of the border and the arches in the top corners all resemble the Rothschild cards, while the trappings of the horse tally exactly with those of the Rothschild Cavalier of Batons, and the curious tortoise-back shield with those on the Rothschild King and Queen of Batons. In this set, however, only one triumph card survives, the Emperor; the rest are suit cards. (In his *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, New York, 1978, Stuart R. Kaplan suggests that another card, shown by him at the top right of p. 121, is also a triumph, the Pope, the Hermit or the World; it is, however, surely the Jack of Coins, though admittedly a bearded Jack is a rarity. Some writers have questioned whether the twenty-three numeral cards, whose measurements Detlef Hoffmann gives as 186 x 93 mm., belong with the other eight Rothschild cards, which measure 185 x 90 mm. according to Hoffmann, and it is true that their borders do not have the wavy lines found on the court cards and the Emperor. The measurement criterion would be conclusive, save that discrepancies between measurements made by different individuals are exceedingly common.) The general treatment, though not the individual style, is highly similar to the Charles VI cards, and the two packs are probably to be assigned to the same milieu. The Swords on the numeral cards are curved.

(6) Another pack, considerably smaller in dimensions than those so far mentioned, appears also to have originated from Ferrara and to have been made for the d'Este family who were Dukes of that city; it is now also in Beinecke Library at Yale. It consists of sixteen cards, comprising eight court cards, the Fool and seven triumphs – the Bagatto, the Pope, Temperance, the Star, the Moon, the Sun and the World. The d'Este arms appear on the Queens of Batons and Swords and the Cavalier and Jack of Batons (the King of that suit has not survived). The arms of the King of Naples appear on the King and Cavalier of Swords. The style again differs from any of the preceding packs, but has more affinity with that of the Charles VI cards than with those by Bembo.

(7) A pack consisting of fifteen cards is in the Museo Civico of Catania, housed in the Castello Ursino. Eleven of them are suit cards, including the 7 and 8 of Swords with curved intersecting Swords: the remaining four consist of the Hermit, the Chariot, the World and one whose identity is dubious. This last shows a naked girl reclining on a stag, wearing a coral necklace. In her left hand she holds an object which, since it is painted in gold on a gold background, is difficult to decipher; in her right hand, which is suspended above the left one, she holds another object, also painted gold against the gold background, which, when I saw the cards, I took to be a fan. Mr Ronald Decker has, however, suggested to me that she is pouring from one vase into another, which would identify her as Temperance: this is the only interpretation of this otherwise mysterious figure that I have come across. The Hermit and World cards closely resemble those of the Charles VI pack: the latter shows a female figure standing on a globe holding an orb in her left hand and swinging a censer in her right; the corresponding card in the Charles VI

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[21] See Ron Decker, 'Two Tarot studies related', part III, *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. IV, no. 1, August 1975, pp. 46-52.

set differs principally in that the female figure holds a sceptre in place of a censer. It thus seems reasonable to assign this pack also to Ferrara.

(8) A set of thirteen cards described and illustrated in full in an article published in 1954 has since largely disappeared from public view. They were at one time all in the possession of Mr Piero Tozzi of New York: one (Temperance) is now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal, and another (the Jack of Cups) was in the F. Cleveland Morgan collection in the same city, and is stated by Stuart R. Kaplan, op. cit., p. 100, to have passed into the ownership of Mr Cleveland Stewart-Patterson, presumably also of Montreal. According to Kaplan, the remaining eleven were sold in the early 1960s to a collector in Milan. The cards were evidently made for some member of the Sforza family, and all but one are copied, with some deliberate divergences, from the Visconti-Sforza pack. Their measurements were given in the article as 170 x 70 mm., but, as pointed out by Mr Ronald Decker, this can be seen from the full-size reproductions to be an error: it should be 170 x 87 mm. The set consists of one card showing only the Visconti/Sforza emblem of a crowned serpent swallowing a woman, one numeral card, six court cards and five triumphs – the Pope, Temperance, the Chariot, the Wheel of Fortune and the Judgment. The Temperance card has been copied from the corresponding one in the Visconti-Sforza pack executed by the later, probably Ferrarese, artist, so that the cards must date from after the time that those six cards were painted. On the one numeral card, the 5 of Swords, the Swords are straight, as in the Visconti-Sforza pack. On the Wheel card, a point of divergence from the Visconti-Sforza card is the ladder, heraldic emblem of the Della Scala family of Verona, on the clothing of the topmost figure, who wears ass's ears, being at the height of his fortunes and about to experience their collapse.[22]

(9) The only one of these nine sets that is, almost certainly, from a regular pack is one consisting of fifteen suit cards, not including any Queen, and all badly damaged by a fire that occurred in 1904, in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Turin. On the testimony of W.L. Schreiber,[23] who does not, however, appear very well informed about the matter, this set comprised twenty-four cards before the fire. It is helpfully reproduced in full in Kaplan's book. Unfortunately, the composition of the set before the catastrophe does not seem to have been recorded, save on a list kept at the library, which Mr Kaplan reproduces and which has itself been partly consumed by the fire. The list starts with the Coins suit (Cavallo, Jack, Ace, 3), followed by the suit of Cups (King, Cavallo, Jack, 3, 4, 9, 10), and then the Batons suit, of which only Ace and 6 are legible. Of the numerals, only Ace and 3 of Coins, 4 and 9 of Cups, 6 and 10 of Batons and Ace, 3, 6, 7 and 10 of Swords survive. There is also a Cavallo of Swords, and three court cards whose suit-sign is unidentifiable, a Cavallo and two Jacks. From the list, the Cavallo cannot belong to the Batons suit, but must be of either Cups or Coins; the Jacks likewise cannot belong to the Batons suit. Evidently there were no triumph cards before the fire. The Swords are curved and intersecting; on the odd-numbered cards, other than the Ace, there is no straight vertical Sword, but unequal numbers on the two sides. To judge by the surviving Cavallo of Swords, the general style of the courts somewhat resembles that of the Rothschild cards.[24]

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[22] Miss Moakley, in her book cited in footnote 24, draws attention to the initials 'A.C.' on the base of the throne of the King of Swords in the Tozzi set. She thinks that these initials are intended as those of Antonio Cicognara, a painter to whom many authorities have credited various surviving fifteenth-century Italian *tarocchi*. The attribution is grounded on a purported quotation from Bordigallo's Chronicle of Cremona given in Count Leopoldo Cicognara's book referred to in footnote 11, to the effect that in 1484 Antonio Cicognara painted a Tarot pack for Cardinal Ascanio Sforza. As observed in more detail in Appendix 2, the quotation is spurious; Count Cicognara was honest but gullible. Art historians are afflicted by an avid desire to attach artists' names to works of art, however flimsy the evidence for it; and so, until more careful study of styles yielded the attribution to Bembo, sets (1) to (3), and others as well, were ascribed to Antonio Cicognara, although no one appears to have attempted to make the elementary check of verifying that Bordigallo's Chronicle said what it was supposed to say; even after the attribution to Bembo had been generally accepted, the claim was made that Cicognara had painted the six cards in the Visconti-Sforza pack that are not by Bembo. Now Miss Moakley was convinced that the quotation was spurious, and hence that there was no reason to suppose that Antonio Cicognara ever painted any Tarot cards at all. Hence she advanced two alternative hypotheses: that the initials 'A.C.' had been added some time after 1831; or that the entire set was a modern forgery. The second hypothesis is surely unlikely: a forger would either have made the cards more unlike the Visconti-Sforza ones, to reduce the suspicion of forgery, or have made them exact copies, so as to throw doubt on which was the original, which the copy. Whether Miss Moakley's first hypothesis is correct, or whether the initials have some altogether different significance, I cannot say. The hypothesis that early playing cards might be forged is not, as such, implausible: for an example of a forged copy of a card from the Sola-Busca *tarocchi*, see D. Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte*, Leipzig, 1972, plate 23(a).

[23] *Die ältesten Spielkarten*, Strasbourg, 1937, footnote 10, p. 102.

[24] The Visconti-Sforza pack is the subject of a book by Miss Gertrude Moakley, *The Tarot Cards Painted by Bonifacio Bembo for the Visconti-Sforza Family*, New York, 1966: all the cards are illustrated and discussed in detail. It is also the subject of *Tarocchi: il mazzo visconteo di Bergamo e New York*, with text by Italo Calvino and notes by S. Samek Ludovici,

As already remarked, of these nine packs, eight contained both triumph cards and suit cards, though in one case only one triumph card has survived and in another only one suit card. Of any fragmentary set not containing any card distinctive of the Tarot pack, we can never say for sure that it was not originally part of such a pack; but, if the pack to which the Turin cards belonged had been a Tarot pack, the chance that all of the fourteen surviving cards should have been among the fifty-two that could equally well have come from a regular pack is very low indeed, so that we can reasonably discount this possibility. Nevertheless, the remaining eight packs testify to the great popularity of *tarocchi* among the fifteenth-century Italian nobility, though we should bear in mind that the greater scope given to an artist by the triumph subjects must have created a strong incentive to a patron, when ordering an expensive hand-painted set, to specify a Tarot pack. Equally striking is the constancy of the subjects used for the triumph cards; despite the wide variety in their treatment, we find always the same subjects as those known from later packs, with the exception of three from the Visconti di Modrone pack which will be discussed below, and the possible exception of the figure on the stag from the Catania pack. Of the standard twenty-one subjects, the only one not represented among any of the fifteenth-century Italian hand-painted cards surviving to us is the Devil: but, since this figure appears on the popular sets of *tarocchi*, printed by woodblock, that have come down to us from the end of the century, this should probably be ascribed to chance.

Parma, 1969, which also gives illustrations of all the cards. There is also a reproduction pack issued by the Grafica Gutenberg, Bergamo; in the United States this is distributed by U.S. Games Systems, Inc., New York. The Visconti-Sforza, Visconti di Modrone and Brambilla packs are illustrated in Emiliano di Parravicino, 'Three packs of Italian Tarocco cards', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. III, 1903, pp. 237-52. All three of these packs painted by Bonifacio Bembo are discussed from an art-historical standpoint in Pietro Toesca, *La pittura e la miniatura nella Lombardia*, Milan, 1912 (see pp. 626-7), reprinted Turin, 1966 (see p. 218); in R. Longhi, 'La restituzione di un trittico d'arte cremonese circa il 1460', *Pinacoteca*, vol. I, 1928, pp. 55-87, reprinted in R. Longhi, *Me pinxit*, Florence, 1968; Fernanda Wittgens, 'Note ed aggiunte a Bonifacio Bembo', *Rivista d'Arte*, vol. XVIII, 1936; and C. Baroni and S. Samek Ludovici, *La pittura lombarda del Quattrocento*, Messina and Florence, 1952 (see pp. 91-116). The Visconti di Modrone pack is discussed by Robert Steele, 'A notice of the Ludus Triumphorum and some early Italian card games', *Archaeologia*, vol. 57, 1900, pp. 185-200, and by Ron and Charlotte Decker, 'The Visconti-Sforza cards in the Cary Collection', *The Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. IV, no. 2, November, 1975, pp. 27-32. Eight cards from it are illustrated in Catherine Perry Hargrave, *A History of Playing Cards*, Boston and New York, 1930, reprinted New York, 1966, p. 226. The Brambilla pack was completely illustrated in a booklet called *48 tarocchi di Bonifacio Bembo*, published by the Istituto Finanziario per l'Arte, Milan, 1971; some of the captions are incorrect. These and several other of the hand-painted Tarot packs discussed in the text are discussed, with several illustrations, in an excellent article by Robert Klein, 'Les tarots enluminés du XV^e siècle', *L'Oeil*, no. 145, 1967, pp. 11-17, 51-2. For illustrations of the Rothschild cards, see R. Klein, op. cit., Detlef Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte*, Leipzig, 1972, plates 17(a) and 20(b), and Leopoldo Cicognara, *Memorie spettanti alla Storia della Calcografia*, Prato, 1831, plate XI. Many works illustrate and discuss the 'Charles VI' tarots: see R. Klein, op. cit., an anonymous picture-book, *Antiche carte da tarocchi*, Rome, 1961, plates III-V; William Andrew Chatto, *Facts and Speculations on the Origin and History of Playing Cards*, London, 1848, p. 187; R. Merlin, *L'Origine des cartes à jouer*, Paris, 1869, p. 89; H.-R. D'Allemagne, *Les Cartes à jouer du XIV au XX^e siècle*, vol. I, Paris, 1906, pp. 11, 13, 15, 181-2 and opposite pp. 12, 172, 414, and vol. II, opposite pp. 4, 18; W.L. Schreiber, *Die ältesten Spielkarten*, Strasbourg, 1937, p. 101; and Eberhard Pinder, 'The history of European playing cards', *Graphis*, vol. 11, 1955, pp. 246-7. For the d'Este cards, see H.-R. D'Allemagne, op. cit., vol. II, opposite pp. 12 and 38. Some cards from the Catania pack, including the figure on the stag, are illustrated in D. Hoffmann, op. cit., plate 18(a); see also R. Klein, op. cit., and *Antiche carte da tarocchi*, plate I, and Guido Libertini, *Il Castello Ursino e le raccolte artistiche e comunali di Catania*, Catania, 1937, pp. 112-13. The catalogue numbers of the cards are 6425-51. One of the Turin cards is shown in D. Hoffmann, op. cit., plate 18(b); see also R. Klein, op. cit., *Antiche carte da tarocchi*, plate I, and W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 102. The Tozzi cards are all illustrated and discussed in M. L. D'Otrange, 'Thirteen Tarot cards from the Visconti-Sforza set', *The Connoisseur*, vol. CXXXIII, 1954, pp. 54-60; see also Gertrude Moakley, op. cit., pp. 33-4, fn. 10, and Ronald Decker, 'Two Tarot studies related', part III, *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. IV, no. 1, August, 1975, pp. 46-52, particularly p. 50. R. Cavendish, *The Tarot*, London, 1975, p. 140, illustrates in colour two Charles VI cards. Kaplan, op. cit., gives illustrations of all these sets, as follows: (1) the Visconti di Modrone pack, seven triumphs, pp. 88-92, and eleven suit cards, pp. 92-5, with a colour plate of the Knight of Cups, plate 9; (2) the Brambilla pack, both triumphs, p. 96, and ten suit cards, pp. 97-8; (3) the Visconti-Sforza pack, all the cards, pp. 36, 65-86, 285, with a colour plate of the Bagatto, plate IV; (4) the Charles VI pack, all the cards, pp. 112-16, with a colour plate of the Love card, plate 2; (5) the Rothschild pack, the one triumph, p. 121, and eight court cards, including that at Bassano, pp. 120-2; (6) the d'Este pack, all the cards, pp. 117-18; (7) the Catania pack, two triumphs, p. 109; (8) the Tozzi pack, all the cards, pp. 100-2; and (9) the Turin pack, all the cards, p. 119.

Besides these nine packs, there are a number of others of which fewer cards have survived, as follows.

(10) A set of five, consisting of four numeral cards and one triumph, the Emperor, was acquired in 1974 from a Milanese dealer by the Fournier Playing-Card Museum at Vitoria in Spain. Like the Tozzi cards, the designs are based very exactly on the corresponding cards in the Visconti-Sforza pack; the one notable departure from the Visconti-Sforza designs is the depiction of a three-tiered tower on the Coin in the Ace of that suit, a heraldic emblem of the Gonzaga family, Marquises of Mantua, according to Mr Decker. The cards have black backs and measure 171 x 87 mm., as close as makes no difference to the dimensions of the Tozzi cards (a discrepancy of a millimetre or two in the measurements of different cards from the same pack, or of the same card measured by different people, is not significant). If the backs of the Tozzi cards are also black, there is therefore a possibility that these five cards belong to the same pack.

(11) There are four numeral cards, one from each suit, in the Correr Museum in Venice: the sword on the Ace of Swords is encircled by a crown and has the unusual feature of piercing a bleeding heart. The cards are precisely similar in style to the numeral cards of the Rothschild set, but, although there is no overlap between them, they cannot actually be from the same pack, since the dimensions do not tally (180 x 93 mm. for the Correr cards, 188 x 90 mm. – or, according to Hoffmann, 186 x 93 mm. – for the Rothschild ones).

(12) Another set of four cards, bought in Milan before 1915, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London: it includes two triumph cards – Death and the Star – and two suit cards – the Jack of Coins and the Ace of Cups. The Jack of Coins corresponds almost exactly in design with that in the Visconti-Sforza pack, and is in a better state of preservation: as far as I am able to see, judging from this card alone, it could perfectly well be by Bembo. The other cards, however, do not in any way resemble the Visconti-Sforza cards (though it will be recalled that the Star in the Visconti-Sforza pack as we now have it is not by Bembo, so that it is conceivable that the Victoria and Albert Star resembles one by Bembo that is now lost). Death is shown as a skeleton wielding a scythe and wearing a cardinal's hat and robe, standing on a black-and-white chequered floor and with a scroll coming from his mouth saying 'Son fine'. The Ace of Cups depicts the Cup as a fountain with a vertical arrow between the two jets which spring from it; the stem of the Cup bears the inscription 'nec spe nec metu', which was the heraldic motto of Isabella d'Este, and the Cup stands on grass; there are two *putti* at its foot, one bearing a shield with the Colleoni arms.[25] The cards measure 167 x 85 mm. I know of no connection between Isabella d'Este and the Colleoni family; the cards could plausibly have been painted for the famous *condottiere* Bartolomeo Colleoni (1400-1476), who was closely associated with Francesco Sforza at certain stages of his career; but Isabella d'Este, marchioness of Mantua, seems a more likely recipient.

(13) Three isolated cards should probably be grouped together. One is a Popess in the Fournier Museo de Naipes at Vitoria. This card was bought at the same time and from the same dealer as the five cards described under (10), but is slightly, though visibly, smaller, measuring 170 x 85 mm.; it has a red back, while the other five have black ones. It is a copy of the Popess in the Visconti-Sforza pack, though not an exact copy; the Popess's tiara, on this card, projects further from her head. The second card is a King of Cups in the collection of Mr N. Biedak of Los Angeles, very closely resembling the Tozzi King of Cups, but seen in right profile, like the Visconti-Sforza one, not in left profile, like that of the Tozzi set; according to Mrs Wayland, it measures 170 x 86 mm. The third card is a Jack of Batons in the collection of Signora C. Marzoli of Milan, measuring 170 x 85 mm., and closely resembling the corresponding Visconti-Sforza card. I do not know the colour of the backs of these last two cards; if it is red, it seems probable that all three come from the same pack, possibly one by the artist responsible for the Tozzi set. Kaplan (op. cit., p. 103) mistakenly groups the Popess with the other five Fournier cards.

(14) The Guildhall, London, has two pairs of hand-painted fifteenth-century cards, which are of very perceptibly different widths, and do not come from the same pack. The wider of these two pairs (138 x 72 mm.) consists of the Aces of Cups and of Swords.

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[25] As often in heraldry, the device on these arms represents a pun on the name of the bearer, though in this case, one unlikely in more modern times: it consists of three pairs of testicles (*coglioni*) which, by a euphemism, later came to be called, and shown as, inverted hearts. The shield on the Ace of Cups is parted per fess, not, as in all other examples of these arms known to me, per pale. Kaplan, op. cit., p. 99, remarks on the presence of a precipice at the very bottom of the card on the Ace of Cups; it is also visible on the Jack of Coins, though not present on the Visconti-Sforza one. As Kaplan observes (pp. 70, 72), such a precipice is a feature of four of the six cards not by Bembo in the Visconti-Sforza pack, Temperance, the Star, the Moon and the Sun. It is, moreover, to be found on three of the Tozzi cards, Temperance, the Wheel of Fortune and the Jack of Cups. Kaplan remarks (pp. 60, 106) that such a precipice is to be found in the painting at the Carthusian monastery near Pavia of Christ on the way to Calvary by Ambrogio Bergognone (active from 1481, died 1523), but draws no conclusion from the fact. Kaplan gives the inscription on the Death card incorrectly as *San fine* (p. 104), which he takes to mean 'Without end'; the first word is *Son*, meaning 'I am'.

The former shows a strong affinity with the Victoria and Albert card: the cup is again a fountain with vertical arrow between two cascades of water, but stands on a chequered floor. There is a blank scroll behind the cup; an odd detail is a small anchor in the top left-hand corner of the card and a small straight sword in its top right-hand corner, looking for all the world like suit-signs, which they obviously cannot be. The Ace of Swords shows a short sword encircled by a crowned serpent biting its tail; behind the sword is a scroll with the words 'Vim vi', and above it a sun with rays and a face, with the letters MIA above the sun. 'Vim vi' is a motto borne by various Italian families, but I have not been able to discover one for whom playing cards are likely to have been painted; the motto is oddly misread by Kaplan (op. cit., p. 111) as 'Arm(o)ur'.

(15) The narrower Guildhall pair (141 x 66 mm.) comprises one triumph card, the World, which is a very close copy, laterally reversed, of that in the Visconti-Sforza pack, and an elaborate card that may dubiously be identified as a Jack of Batons. This second card, which Kaplan (ibid.) mistakenly groups with the wider pair (14), shows a crossbowman shooting at a heron over water; the archer wears a flat cap, there are trees behind him, and the heron is standing by some rushes. Over the right shoulder of the archer, not attached to anything, is a vertical cudgel, resembling a Baton of the so-called Spanish type. It is true that on some early Italian cards, including the d'Este *tarocchi* at Yale (6), the Batons can be rather knobbly, but, with the exception to be mentioned below, there is nothing else at all like this; besides, in almost all other cases, the court figure holds his suit-sign in his hand. Moreover, the whole design seems rather German in style than Italian. The Guildhall catalogue records both pairs as having been found in an old chest in Seville.

(16) A pair of cards at the Muzeum Narodowego in Warsaw, bought in 1946 from the Potocki collection, are both court cards, the Cavalier of Coins and the Queen of Cups; the presence of the Queen shows that they must have come from a Tarot pack. They show no especial stylistic resemblance to any other of the cards here listed.

(17) A very fine pair of Jacks, of Swords and Coins, is at Hanover (Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum): the style is quite unlike Bembo's, but the Coin held by the Jack of that suit bears the Visconti-Sforza serpent.

(18) An isolated card, the Jack of Coins, is in the collection of Signor Francesco Andreoletti of Milan, and is a copy, though laterally reversed, of the corresponding card in the Visconti-Sforza pack; its measurements (140 x 66 mm.) tally closely with those of the narrower Guildhall pair.

(19) By far the most puzzling of all is the set of nine cards known as the Goldschmidt cards, again from the name of a former owner, at the Spielkarten Museum in Leinfelden. One is a 5 of Batons; the Batons appear in exactly the 'Spanish' form and arrangement. Another is an Ace of Cups: as in the wider Guildhall pair and the Victoria and Albert set, the cup is a fountain, with two cascades of water and a vertical arrow between them; as on the Guildhall card, it stands on a chequered floor. The stem of the cup is encircled by a serpent biting its tail, like that on the Ace of Swords in the Guildhall pair, although uncrowned and facing in the opposite direction. A third card is surely to be identified as the Ace of Swords, although Detlef Hoffmann has suggested that it be equated with the Death card of the Tarot pack. It shows a short sword, very similar to that on the Guildhall Ace of Swords, to the blade of which is chained a skull and the hilt of which has a pair of crossbones superimposed. A fourth card shows a crowned dolphin: probably this is just a heraldic device, and the card, like the Tozzi card showing the Visconti-Sforza serpent, was not meant to be used in play. The remaining five cards are a complete mystery. (a) One shows a falconer, standing on a chequered floor, with a little dog at his feet, a bird on his hand and a hoop suspended from his shoulders; floating above his shoulder is a toothed wheel. (b) Another shows a sun, with rays and a face, very like that on the Guildhall Ace of Swords, above a chequered floor on which stand three metallic objects bearing respectively, the letters a, m, c (perhaps heraldically conventionalised mountains, or perhaps something quite different). (c) A third shows a bishop, again standing on a chequered floor; above his shoulder is an anchor, exactly like that on the Guildhall Ace of Cups. (d) A fourth shows a lady wearing a crown, holding a model of a castle and standing on the usual chequered floor, her gown held by a lady in waiting; W.L. Schreiber takes her to be an Empress. (e) The final card has no chequered floor, and shows a lady wearing a crown and kneeling at a prie-dieu, with a maidservant in attendance; Schreiber identifies her as a Dogaressa, with what right I do not know.

(20) In view of the falconer on one of the Goldschmidt cards, it is worth mentioning also a single, very large, card (177 x 95 mm.) showing a falconer, also at the Spielkarten Museum at Leinfelden. In 1955 Eberhard Pinder established that this card was a forgery, though he did not publish this finding. However, the card is so unlike any other known to survive that it is probable that the forger was imitating some original that has since disappeared; he would hardly have gone to the trouble of producing a forgery bearing no resemblance to any authentic prototype.[26]

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[26] For colour illustrations of eight of the nine Goldschmidt cards, see D. Hoffmann, op. cit., plate 19; for discussion of them, see pp. 18 and 67 of the same work, the article by E.

One of the striking facts is how frequently the Visconti-Sforza cards were copied, sometimes only for certain cards in a pack. It is not especially surprising that the cards of a famous pack should have served as a model for later artists; but it is rather notable that it seems always to have been the Visconti-Sforza pack which played this role, and not, for example, the Brambilla or the Visconti di Modrone one. There might be suspicions of the authenticity of some of these cards; but such suspicions could not be founded on the mere fact that Visconti-Sforza cards have been copied, since there is surely no basis for suspecting the genuineness either of the Victoria and Albert cards (12) or of the narrower Guildhall pair (15). On the whole, I am disposed to believe that nos. (1) to (19) are all genuine.

It is obvious that the Goldschmidt cards pose a severe problem. It is not apparent, from the cards themselves, that they are Tarot cards at all: not one of them can be identified with any assurance as one of the Tarot triumphs. Hoffmann equates the falconer (a) with the Bagatto; but the single 'Falconer' card (no. 20) resembles any ordinary Bagatto even less, and so makes this identification doubtful. Hoffmann also equates card (b) with the Sun of the Tarot pack; but since the very similar sun on the Guildhall Ace of Swords clearly does not determine the identity of the card, it may be that, on this Goldschmidt card, the sun is again decorative, and that the identifying symbol is the three mysterious objects standing on the floor. The bishop might be a replacement for the Pope: on a sheet taken from a woodblock, mentioned below, a female bishop evidently substitutes for the Popess. Schreiber might be right in saying that the lady with the model castle is an Empress; but none of these identifications is compelling, and the lady at the prie-dieu remains completely enigmatic.

There is, nevertheless, a reason for regarding the Goldschmidt cards as part of some very unusual Tarot pack. Their iconographical links are with the wider Guildhall pair; but there is some reason to suppose that the narrower Guildhall pair comes from the same pack, which must, if so, have been a Tarot pack, since one member of that pair is the World. The dimensions of the narrower Guildhall pair (141 x 66 mm.) coincide as nearly as may be with those of the Goldschmidt cards (140 x 66 mm.). Where the wider Guildhall cards have unpatterned gold backgrounds, the narrower ones have gold backgrounds with patterns very similar to those on the Goldschmidt cards. The pattern does not seem to be exactly the same on any two of the Goldschmidt cards, nor does the pattern on any one of them tally precisely with that on either of the narrower Guildhall cards; but the pattern on one is very similar to that on Goldschmidt card (b) (the card with the sun), and that on the other has a clear resemblance to those on Goldschmidt cards (a) and (e) (the falconer and the lady at the prie-dieu). Both the narrow Guildhall cards have black borders, just as do the Goldschmidt cards. The only iconographical resemblances are the Spanish-style Batons on the Goldschmidt 5 of that suit and the exactly similar one on the Guildhall card presumably to be identified as the Jack of that suit, and the caps worn by the latter figure and the Goldschmidt falconer. These points do not together make the assignment of the two sets to

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Pinder in *Graphis*, vol. 11, 1955, p. 243, the same author's *Charta Lusoria*, Biberach an der Riss, 1961, p. 89, W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 100, and R. Klein, op. cit. For a colour illustration of the single 'Falconer' card, see E. Pinder's *Graphis* article, p. 243. Pinder's later judgment that this card was a forgery was based on a chemical analysis of the paint by the Doerner Institut in Munich, backed by the stylistic judgment of Dr Degenhard, of Munich, and others; I owe this information to Frau Margot Dietrich, of the Leinfelden Museum. For the Correr cards, see R. Merlin, op. cit., p. 66 and plates 8 and 9. For the Warsaw cards, see Stanislaw Sawicky, 'Dwie włoskie karty "tarocchi" w zbiorach Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie', *Roczwik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, vol. II, 1957, pp. 605-24. A colour illustration of one of the wider pair of Guildhall cards (the Ace of Swords) is in Roger Tilley, *Playing Cards*, London, 1967, p. 9. For a colour illustration of the Hanover cards, see J.A.S. Morrison, 'Gamblers' printed art', *The Penrose Annual*, vol. 53, London, 1959, p 54. Three of the Victoria & Albert cards are illustrated, two in colour, in R. Cavendish, op. cit., pp. 126 and 140. All the cards in sets (10) to (19), but not the Falconer card (no. 20), are illustrated in Kaplan, op. cit., as follows: (10), p. 103; (11), p. 123; (12), p. 104; (13), pp. 103, 105; (14), p. 111; (15), pp. 104, 111; (16), p. 109; (17), p. 108; (18), p. 105; and (19), p. 110. Mr Decker cites, as a reference for the Gonzaga tower, *The Complete Paintings of Mantegna*, ed. N. Garavaglia, New York, 1967, p. 104. Of the cards in sets (1) to (20), those I have not personally seen are the ones in Paris, namely the Charles VI and Rothschild sets (nos. 4 and 5), those at Turin, Warsaw and Hanover (nos 9, 16 and 17) and those in private collections (thirteen of the Visconti-Sforza set in the Colleoni collection in Bergamo, the Marzoli and Biedak cards in set no. 13, the Tozzi cards, no. 8, and the Andreoletti card, no. 18). For these I have relied on photographs and on information, including measurements, very kindly supplied by Dr and Mrs Harold Wayland, of Pasadena, California, who many years ago undertook a comprehensive study of fifteenth-century Italian hand-painted cards, but regrettably never published the results of their findings; their help, without which I should not have known of some of these sets, has been invaluable to me.

the same original pack more than a plausible conjecture: but since, in several of the Goldschmidt cards and in the Guildhall Jack of Batons, if that is what it is, we have the only examples from these fifteenth-century hand-painted cards that present difficulties of identification, with the sole exception of the Catania figure on the stag, it is a tempting one.

If the Goldschmidt cards do come from a Tarot pack, then they testify to the existence in the fifteenth century of a type of such pack employing the 'Spanish' form of the Latin suit-signs and deviating greatly from the norm in the representation of the triumph subjects, and probably also in the selection of those subjects, but yet having links with *tarocchi* of a more usual kind, as exemplified by the Victoria and Albert cards and by the Visconti-Sforza pack. The implications of this possibility will be discussed in more detail below.

The Goldschmidt cards, and their relation to the two Guildhall pairs and to the Victoria and Albert cards, do indeed pose a difficult problem which is far from being solved. But if we set the Goldschmidt cards on one side, and, with them, the single Falconer card, almost all is plain sailing: the smaller sets, (10) to (18), simply confirm the impression derived from the nine packs of which thirteen or more cards have survived. There are a few problems about where certain of the cards were painted or at whose order: but their identity and the composition of the packs from which they came are for the most part unproblematic. Making the suggested assumptions that the Marzoli and Biedak cards belong with the Fournier Popess, and the Bassano card with the Rothschild ones, we have nine sets of from one to eight cards, of which five come from Tarot packs and the other four could be from regular packs. Of the five from Tarot packs, all have some suit cards, and four have one or more triumphs. Moreover, when it consists of only four or fewer cards, the chance that a set which could have come from a regular pack actually came from a Tarot pack is significant. If we take the denomination of a surviving card to be random, there is of course a 2:1 chance that a single card from a Tarot pack will be a suit card other than a Queen. The chance that both of two cards will be suit cards other than Queens is over 44 per cent, and, even with four cards, the chance that none of them will be distinctive of the Tarot pack is nearly 19 per cent. But even if we suppose that every one of our sets from (1) to (18) that could have formed part of a regular pack did in fact do so, there are, if the suggested identifications are accepted, only five such sets altogether as against thirteen from Tarot packs. It is plain that the great majority of the playing-card packs painted by hand for the Italian nobility of the fifteenth century were *tarocchi*.

The Goldschmidt cards aside, the four more fragmentary sets which include triumph cards – the five Fournier ones (10), the four Victoria and Albert ones (12), the Fournier-Biedak-Marzoli trio (13) and the narrower Guildhall pair (15) – confirm our previous impression that the triumph subjects, though not their representation, were standardised from an early date. This is reinforced by the earliest detailed reference to the Tarot pack, a sermon against gaming from an anonymous manuscript volume of sermons by a Dominican friar. The volume was formerly in the possession of Robert Steele, and is now at the Museum of Art in Cincinnati. The bulk of the sermon was published by Steele in his article of 1900,[27] in which he dates the volume to between 1450 and 1470; in his subsequent article of 1901,[28] he gives the date, more cautiously, as between 1450 and 1480. In this sermon, the preacher lists the twenty-one triumph cards, together with the Matto, as if they formed an invariable set: the subjects are precisely the usual ones, though not in exactly the order most familiar to us. The same selection of triumph subjects is confirmed by many literary references from the sixteenth century.[29] It is found, likewise, on certain surviving sheets of cards, printed from wood blocks and made for the popular market, dating from the end of the fifteenth century. For our purpose, the sheets showing regular packs are not of importance: I shall list only those four which show *tarocchi*.

(21) Three coloured sheets for one such pack are in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and show, in whole or part, twenty of the twenty-one standard triumph cards.

(22) A sheet for another such pack, showing all twenty-one triumphs and three Queens, is in the Rosenwald Collection in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and another copy, much less well preserved, in the Spielkarten Museum in Leinfelden. The Rosenwald Collection has two other sheets, probably though not quite certainly from the same pack, showing suit cards.

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[27] See footnote 2.

[28] See footnote 15.

[29] See Chapter 20.

(23) Yet another sheet, showing six triumph cards, is in the Rothschild Collection at the Louvre. A further sheet of six triumph cards, without doubt from the same pack, is at the Bibliothèque de l'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Paris. Together they show the Wheel, the Chariot, the Hermit, the Hanged Man, Death, the Devil, the Tower, the Star, the Moon, the Sun, the World and the Judgment or Angel.

(24) Finally, a sheet showing two numeral cards, a fragment that is probably the Fool, and, in whole or part, fifteen triumph cards, is at the Beinecke Library at Yale, having been part of the Cary Collection. Among these, there are certainly identifiable the Bagatto, the Empress, the Emperor, Temperance, Fortitude, the Wheel, the Chariot, the Devil, the Tower, the Star, the Moon and the Sun: there are also fragmentary cards that could be the Pope and Love cards, and a female Bishop who presumably replaces the Popess. Several cards resemble the corresponding ones in the Tarot de Marseille pattern.[30]

A discussion of the probable places of origin of these various popular Tarot packs will be postponed until Chapter 20. A detailed analysis of all the cards in the hand-painted packs (1) to (19) and on these four sets of sheets will be found at the end of the present chapter.

There are two late fifteenth-century exceptions to the general rule that the triumph subjects are always the same; these both substitute individual classical and Biblical characters for the generalised figures of the usual Tarot triumphs. One is the celebrated Sola-Busca *tarocchi*, a copper-engraved pack of which several examples are extant; it was made in Venice by a Ferrarese artist in 1491, or possibly in 1523.[31] It has the usual number of cards in each suit, and the suit-signs are standard; but the numeral cards are very fancifully executed, the suit-signs not being displayed in the usual manner, but worked into a picture containing one or more figures. The court cards are identified with various historical characters, whose names are shown on the cards. There is a Matto, but the twenty-one triumph cards, which are numbered from I to XXI, again depict characters of classical and Biblical history, their names being shown on the cards; there is no correspondence with the usual subjects.[32] The other is a pack designed by the poet Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441-1494). It was to have four suits, made up of the usual fourteen cards each, but with the non-standard suit-signs of Whips, Eyes, Arrows and Vases; in addition, it was to have a Fool (*Folle*) and twenty-one non-standard triumphs. Again, there was no correspondence between their subjects, each of which represented some quality, such as patience, modesty, etc., and was symbolised by an appropriate historical character, and the standard ones.[33] Both these are evidently conscious departures from the norm: they in no way call in question the existence of a norm. The standard composition of the Tarot pack was plainly fixed at a very early stage in its history, despite occasional experiments such as the Sola-Busca *tarocchi* and those of Boiardo. Later, as we shall see, a number of variant forms developed; but, in fifteenth-century Italy, the number and identity of the cards of the Tarot pack was completely determinate.

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[30] A fragmentary card on one of the Metropolitan Museum sheets is probably the Moon, but might be the Star; the other of this pair is missing. Their catalogue numbers are 26.101.5, 26.101.4 and 31.54.159; a composite photograph of the last two is reproduced by Kaplan, op. cit., p. 125. The catalogue number of the Rosenwald sheet is B 19823; the two other sheets with suit cards are B 19821-2. See Boris Mandrovsky, 'Early Italian playing-cards in the Rosenwald Collection, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.', *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. I, no. 2, November 1972, pp. 1 and 8. The catalogue number of the Rothschild sheet is 3804. The cards shown are the Chariot, Death, the Devil, the Tower, the Star and the Moon. See W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 104, where, however, the sheet is incorrectly stated to show the Sun instead of the Star. The catalogue number of the sheet in the Cary Collection is I-1005. The cards definitely identifiable are the 7 and 8 of Batons, the Bagatto, the Emperor, a female bishop presumably representing or replacing the Popess, Temperance, Fortitude, the Chariot, the Wheel, the Devil, the Tower, the Star, the Moon and the Sun. There are also fragments probably to be identified as the Fool, the Pope and Love. Half of the Rosenwald sheet with the triumph cards is illustrated in Mandrovsky's article, and the whole of it by Kaplan, pp. 130-1, in both cases printed the wrong way round; the Rothschild sheet is illustrated by Hoffmann, op. cit., plate 14(b), and it and the Beaux Arts sheet by Kaplan, pp. 128-9. The Cary sheet has not, so far as I know, previously been reproduced.

[31] One card bears the inscription 'Col permesso del Senato Veneto nell'anno ab urbe condita MLXX' ('With the permission of the Senate of Venice in the year 1070 after the foundation of the city'). A traditional date for the foundation of the city of Venice is 421, yielding the date 1491 for the cards; but W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 105, remarks that an alternative date is 453, yielding 1523 for the cards.

[32] D. Hoffmann, op. cit., p. 68, gives Ferrara as the place of origin of this pack. For discussion and illustrations, see Arthur Mayger Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, London, vol. I, 1938, pp. 241-7, and vol. IV, 1938, plates 370-93. Kaplan, pp. 126-7, illustrates twenty triumphs and three court cards.

[33] Each card was to bear a descriptive tercet composed by Boiardo; there were also to be two extra cards, bearing sonnets by him. The resulting poems, consisting of the two sonnets and the tercets arranged to make five *capitoli*, one for each suit and one for the triumphs, were printed separately in 1523 in a volume published in Venice and containing poems by various authors. They were reprinted, under the title 'I Tarocchi', together with a previously unpublished commentary by Pier Antonio Viti da Urbino (*c.* 1470-1500), by Angelo Solerti in *Le Poesi Volgari e Latine di M. M. Boiardo*, Bologna, 1894, pp. 313-38, with notes on pp. xxxii-xxxv,

The important exception to this is the Visconti di Modrone pack, which we have yet to describe. It diverges from the norm in two ways, both in respect of the suit cards and in respect of the triumphs. Among the sixty-seven surviving cards are all forty numeral cards save the 3 of Coins. However, there are six different denominations of court card, a male and a female one of each rank: King and Queen, Knight and Dame (or male and female Cavalier), and Page (or Jack) and Maid. Although there is no suit in which all six court cards survive, they are distributed so randomly as to make it impossible to suppose otherwise than that there were originally all six in each suit: there survive the King, Queen, Dame and Maid of Swords, the Queen, Dame, Page and Maid of Batons, the King, Knight, Page and Maid of Cups and the King, Queen, Knight, Dame and Maid of Coins. Of the eleven surviving triumph cards, eight represent standard subjects – the Empress, the Emperor, Love, Fortitude, the Chariot, Death, Judgment and the World. The other three cards, however, represent the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, subjects which do not, of course, occur in the ordinary Tarot pack.

The Visconti di Modrone pack is the only Tarot pack, of any kind, in which the suits include court cards other than the usual King, Queen, Cavalier and either Jack or Maid. There must have been sixty-four suit cards in all: how many triumphs there were originally, and whether a Fool was included, it is impossible to say. Ronald Decker has suggested that there may originally have been only fourteen triumphs, and no Fool, so as to make up the usual total of 78 cards;[34] but the total number of cards in the pack

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and again in A. Zottoli (ed.), *Tutte le opere di Matteo Maria Boiardo*, Milan, 1936-7, vol. 2, pp. 702-16, with notes pp. 748-9. The title 'I Tarocchi' is not Boiardo's; neither he nor Viti uses the word *tarocchi*, but, instead, *trionfi* (sometimes for the twenty-one triumph cards, sometimes for the pack as a whole). The suits represent four passions: love (Arrows), jealousy (Eyes), fear (Whips) and hope (Vases). Each court card depicts an appropriate Biblical or classical character. The Fool (called by Viti *macto*) is called *il Mondo* (the World), a reversal of the usual practice by which the World is the highest triumph card; each of the actual triumph cards represents some quality, such as patience, modesty, etc., and is symbolised by an appropriate historical character; there is no correspondence with the usual triumph subjects. Viti's commentary is addressed to a lady of the court of Urbino; he expresses the hope that his patroness will have a pack made in accordance with the designs he describes. She must have done so, since Carlo Lozzi, 'Le Antiche Carte da Giuoco', *La Bibliofilia,* vol. I, 1900, pp. 37-46 and 181-6, mentions just such a pack, though missing all the court cards and the Fool, and R. Merlin, *L'Origine des cartes à jouer*, Paris, 1869, pp. 94-6 and plate 28, speaks of another copy, missing five court cards, seven numeral cards, the Fool and all the triumph cards. (Merlin naturally does not recognise his pack as a Tarot pack, and Lozzi fails to connect his with Boiardo's poem.) The pack illustrated by Merlin was very probably identical with one sold at Christie's in 1971 to Signor Carlo Alberto Chiesa of Milan; this was a pack printed from wood blocks, and also missing the Fool and all the triumph cards, as well as a few court cards and numeral cards. For more illustrations and further details, see M. Dummett, 'Notes on a fifteenth-century pack of cards from Italy', *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. I, no. 2, February 1973, pp. 1-6. The pack is now in an anonymous Swiss collection.

[34] Letter to the *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. III, no. 1, August, 1974, pp. 23-4, 48; see also letter by M. Dummett, ibid., vol. III, no. 2, November, 1974, pp. 27-31, and Ronald Decker, 'Two Tarot studies related', part III, ibid., vol. IV, no. 1, August, 1975, pp. 46-52 (esp. p. 50). Mr Decker presumes that the Visconti di Modrone pack had only 78 cards, like other Tarot packs; since it must have had 64 suit cards, that leaves only 14 triumph cards and no Fool. There can, on this reasoning, have been no Fool, since Mr Decker accepts my view that the three missing Virtues must originally have been present, and, if we add these to the eleven surviving triumphs, we already obtain 14, and there is no room for the Fool. Mr Decker then takes the very illogical step of arguing that, since there are only 13 (surviving) triumph cards in the Visconti-Sforza pack that were painted by Bembo, perhaps these, together with the Fool, were all that the pack originally contained. This is illogical because in this pack there are only the usual 56 suit cards, so that he is suggesting an original pack of only 70 cards, whereas the original premiss was that all Tarot packs had 78 cards. He attempts to rescue his hypothesis by conjecturing that the Visconti-Sforza pack had originally six court cards in each suit; but this is obviously very special pleading. On his hypothesis, there would, besides the suit cards, have been seven cards in common between the two packs: the Empress, the Emperor, Love, Justice, the Chariot, Death and the Judgment. Seven of the triumphs present in the Visconti di Modrone pack would then have been removed, namely the World and the six Virtues other than Justice, when the Visconti-Sforza pack was painted, to make room for the Fool, the Bagatto, the Popess, the Pope, the Wheel of Fortune, the Hermit (which originally

is unlikely to have been seen as a significant feature. Since four of the stock set of seven Virtues were included among the triumphs, it seems probable that the other three were also: Temperance and Justice, which belong to the standard list of triumph subjects, and Prudence, which does not. It is just possible, on the other hand, that what was held constant was the ratio between the number of triumphs and the number of cards in each suit, which, in the 78-card Tarot pack, is 3:2; if this was also so in the Visconti di Modrone pack, it would have had twenty-four triumph cards, in which case it could have contained all save one of the usual subjects, making, if the Fool was included, a pack of 89 cards altogether; indeed, if we do not suppose that it included Prudence, it could have had all of the usual subjects.

However this may be, the divergence of the Visconti di Modrone pack from the norm, both as to the number of suit cards and as to the subjects, if not the number, of the triumph cards, strongly suggests that it dates from an early period when the Tarot pack had not yet assumed its definitive form. In fact, it is probably the earliest of all the examples of that pack that have survived to us. It has usually been thought to have been made for Filippo Maria Visconti, which would date it to 1447, the year of his death, at the latest. All three of the Bembo packs bear emblems and mottoes of the Visconti family, but that does not prove that they were made for Filippo Maria, since Francesco Sforza, his successor, had in 1441 married his illegitimate daughter by Agnese del Maino, Bianca Maria Visconti, and had assumed the name Visconti-Sforza and, with it, many of the Visconti devices. It is indeed, virtually certain that the Visconti-Sforza pack was made for Francesco Sforza. One reason given by Robert Steele for taking the Visconti di Modrone pack to have been made for Filippo Maria is admittedly flimsy. He thought that the Love card, which shows a man and woman joining hands before a tent above which flies a winged and blindfold Cupid, carried a reference to Filippo Maria's second marriage. Filippo Maria divorced his first wife, Beatrice di Tenda, in Italian style, having her executed for adultery in 1418; in 1428, he married Maria of Savoy, although the marriage was probably never consummated. The tent on the Love card is hung with shields, alternately showing the Visconti serpent and a white cross on a red ground, which Steele took to be the arms of Savoy. But, if the cards were painted by Bembo, an attribution questioned by no one, they cannot have been made as early as 1428, and it is unlikely that there should have been any allusion to this unfortunate marriage at any later date; Ronald and Charlotte Decker identify the shield with the cross as the arms of the Principality of Pavia, a title held by all the Visconti and Sforza dukes.[35] The principal reason for thinking that the cards were painted for Filippo Maria is, however, that the numeral cards of the Coins suit, other than the Ace and 2, show actual coins, the gold florin of Filippo Maria, bearing the letters 'FI MA' and made by the imprint of an actual die; the same is true of all the eleven surviving cards of the Coins suit in the Brambilla pack, but not of the Visconti-Sforza pack. The Deckers surmise, instead, that they were made by means of 'seals of the sort used to attach wax imprints to official documents';[36] this strikes me as rather unlikely, in view of the fact that both sides of the coin are shown: it does not seem probable that there were two distinct seals, corresponding exactly to the two sides of the coin. The figures on the court cards of Swords in the Visconti di Modrone pack bear a gold fruit on their costumes, which the Deckers identify as a quince, a Sforza emblem; but this need not imply that the cards were painted after Filippo Maria's death, since

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represented Time) and the Hanged Man. Later, when the number of triumphs was increased by eight, this was done by restoring, from the original set of subjects, the World and two of the Virtues, Temperance and Fortitude, but not the other four, and adding the Devil, the Tower, the Star, the Moon and the Sun. All this makes so little sense, and is so grossly implausible, that the hypothesis that demands it is not to be entertained. What is impressive about the fifteenth-century Tarot packs that have come down to us is not the variation in subjects, but, on the contrary, their invariance, given the fact that no pack has survived complete. Certainly we must allow that, after the Visconti di Modrone pack was made, four of the seven Virtues were removed; the advantage of the hypothesis that that pack contained twenty-four triumph cards (not including the Fool as a triumph) is that it gives a reason for the removal of at least three of them when the number was reduced to twenty-one.

[35] Ron and Charlotte Decker, 'The Visconti-Sforza cards in the Cary Collection', *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. IV, no. 2, November 1975, pp. 27-32; see p. 29.

[36] Ibid., p. 31. The Deckers wish to prove that the pack was painted for Francesco Sforza, not for Filippo Maria Visconti.

Francesco Sforza was in his service, as well as being married to his daughter. The probability seems therefore to be that both the Visconti di Modrone and the Brambilla packs were painted for Filippo Maria Visconti, the former being the earlier of the two and dating from the earliest stage of existence of the Tarot pack.

The Deckers believe that all three Bembo packs were painted after the death of Filippo Maria. Stuart Kaplan, on the other hand, takes the more usual view that the Visconti di Modrone and Brambilla packs were both painted for him, but regards the Brambilla pack as the earlier (op. cit., p. 107). So far as we can tell, the composition of the suits in the Brambilla pack was standard (or what came to be standard); since only two of the triumphs survive, we cannot be certain about them. If the composition of the Brambilla pack was in fact standard, it seems more likely that it is the later of the two. Hankering still after an identification of the Visconti di Modrone pack as a wedding present, which has only tradition, not evidence, to speak for it (and not, of course, an ancient tradition), Kaplan makes the novel suggestion that it was painted for the wedding of Francesco Sforza with Bianca Maria Visconti in 1441. Taken together with his view that the Brambilla pack is earlier still, this yields a date rather too soon for such a commission to have been given to Bembo, whose earliest dateable work is from 1442. As Ronald Decker has observed, the style of the Visconti di Modrone cards resembles Bembo's illustrations for a *History of Lancelot* dated 1446. If we assume that the Brambilla pack was the later, we must leave time for Bembo's receiving from Filippo Maria a second commission to execute a set of Tarot cards; we shall therefore probably not be far wrong if we date the Visconti di Modrone pack to about 1445. We know from the Ferrara account-books that the Tarot pack (*carte da trionfi*) was already in existence by 1442, and was sufficiently familiar to that court to bear a generic name. On the other hand, I have argued that the Visconti di Modrone cards are not likely to have been painted many years after the first invention of the Tarot pack. That event may therefore be reasonably placed at somewhere around 1440 – the approximate date, incidentally, assigned to the painting in the Casa Borromeo.

With the possible exception of the Goldschmidt cards and of one or both of the two Guildhall pairs, all the early Tarot cards we possess are Italian; and though, as we shall see, it cannot be ruled out that the pack was known elsewhere during the fifteenth century, there is no conclusive evidence that it was. We can therefore safely say that it was in Italy, specifically in northern Italy, that the pack was invented and first became popular. Furthermore, it appears initially to have originated and have been in use in aristocratic circles. The type of pack of which the few sheets, printed from wood blocks, listed above are the only remaining representatives was no doubt, in its time, very common. As already remarked, cheap mass-produced playing cards are highly ephemeral, and survive, when they do, only through some unusual accident, whereas costly objects made by an acclaimed artist are preserved: there are in fact not very many more popular cards, printed from wood blocks, surviving from fifteenth-century Italian regular packs than there are Tarot cards of the same type. We may therefore safely assume that in the last quarter of the fifteenth century the Tarot pack attained great popularity among the lower ranks of society; this is confirmed by the Steele sermon, the author of which was probably not preaching to a congregation drawn only from the nobility, and, perhaps, by the painting at Issogne. Nevertheless, the connection with the nobility, and especially with the courts of Ferrara and Milan, compels attention. We have seen that at least two out of three, and probably more, of the cards hand-painted for the nobility were *tarocchi*, a proportion there is no reason to suppose so high for the popular cards printed from wood blocks. The three packs by Bonifacio Bembo were all made for the Milanese court, the Visconti di Modrone and Brambilla packs probably for Filippo Maria Visconti and the Visconti-Sforza one for Francesco Sforza. We have noted that the Tozzi, Fournier, Biedak and Marzoli cards come from at least two distinct packs, though probably by the same painter. That painter must have had access to the Visconti-Sforza cards in order to make such close copies of them. The card in the Tozzi set bearing only the Visconti-Sforza serpent implies that that pack was intended for the Milanese court. If Ronald Decker is right in identifying the three-tiered tower on the Fournier Ace of Coins as a Gonzaga emblem, that suggests that the five cards of the Fournier set (10) do not after all come from the same pack as the

Tozzi cards, and that we therefore have to do with three distinct copies of the Visconti-Sforza pack. A possible supposition is that all three were commissioned from the same artist by Beatrice d'Este, who married Lodovico il Moro, the last great Sforza duke, in 1491 and died in childbirth in 1497: one (the Tozzi set) for her own use, one (the five Fournier cards) as a present to her sister Isabella, who married Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, in 1490, and one (the Fournier-Biedak-Marzoli trio) for an unknown recipient. (The Della Scala emblem on the figure on the Wheel of Fortune card in the Tozzi set remains a mystery, since that family had been in eclipse for a century.) The Victoria and Albert cards may also come from a pack made for Isabella d'Este, in view of the inscription of her motto on the Ace of Cups (though the presence on that card of the Colleoni shield would then be mysterious); the artist must surely also have had access to the Visconti-Sforza cards, in view of the exact correspondence of the two Jacks of Coins. The painter of the narrower Guildhall pair and of the Andreoletti Jack of Coins, whether or not these are from the same pack, must also have seen the Visconti-Sforza cards. In view of the presence of the arms of the King of Naples on two of the cards, the d'Este pack at Yale was probably made for Ercole I, the father of Beatrice and Isabella, who became Duke of Ferrara in 1471 and died in 1505, since he was married to Eleanora of Aragon, the daughter of Ferdinando I, King of Naples. We may also with reasonable confidence assign the Charles VI, Rothschild and Catania packs to those made for the Ferrara court. The Ferrara account-books continue to record orders for Tarot packs, among cards of other kinds, for example, in 1452, in 1454 and in 1461;[37] and in 1492 Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, the brother of Beatrice and Isabella, wrote from Hungary, where he was staying with his aunt, Beatrice of Aragon, Queen of Hungary, to thank his mother Eleanora for sending a variety of things including gilded Tarot cards (*triumphi dorati*).[38] We have no way of being sure, but a plausible guess might be that the Tarot pack originated in the court of Ferrara, in 1440 or a few years earlier, and was soon afterwards adopted by the wealthier court of Milan. In any case, it seems probable that, for the first two or three decades of its existence, it was restricted to the nobility, and only after that spread out among a wider social circle.

Although the Tarot pack originated in the fifteenth century, it did not originally bear that name. The word 'Tarot' has become more or less naturalised as an English word; it is in fact the French adaptation of the Italian name of these cards – *tarocchi* or, in the singular, *tarocco*. In early sources the French word is sometimes spelled *tarau* (plural *taraux*), *tarault* or simply *taro*. In every other language but French and English, the hard *c* sound of the Italian word has been kept – *Tarock* in German (formerly often spelled *Tarok* or *Taroc*), *tarokk* in Hungarian, *taroky* in Czech, etc. Where the word *tarocchi* comes from, nobody knows: no plausible etymology for it has ever been suggested, and this deficiency was already being commented on by an Italian poet, Lollio, in 1550.[39] It is not, however, the original name of the cards: the first use of the word *tarocchi* known to me dates from 1516, once again from an account-book of the Ferrara court.[40] Throughout the fifteenth century, the word used was always *trionfi*, or, in Latin, *triumphi* – 'triumphs': this name was still in use in 1500.[41] The word *trionfi*, strictly speaking, refers only to what we have been calling the triumph cards, sometimes taken as including the Fool, sometimes not. By transference, it was used to apply also to the game played with the Tarot pack, and sometimes to the pack itself, including the suit cards; but the more correct way of referring to the cards of the Tarot pack, taken together, was as *carte da trionfi*. At some time between 1500 and 1516, the new name, *tarocchi*, superseded the old one, and was thereafter invariably used as the way of referring to these cards in Italian.

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[37] See the references under footnote 19.

[38] See G. Bertoni, op. cit., footnote 19, p. 218.

[39] 'Invettiva contra il Giuoco del Taroco': 'E quel nome fantastico, e bizarro/Di Tarocco, senz'ethimologia,/Fa palese à ciascun, che i ghiribizzi/Gli havesser guasto, e zorpiato il cervello' ('And that whimsical, bizarre name "Tarocco", without any etymology, makes plain to each that fantasies have damaged and befuddled his brain' – 'he' being the inventor of the game).

[40] In 1516 the *Registro di Guardaroba* of the court of Ferrara repeatedly records the purchase of two, or four, *para de tarocchi*, and similar entries occur in the following year; see G. Bertoni, op. cit., 1917, pp. 218-19. The word *tarocchi* also occurs in Francesco Berni, *Capitolo del Giuoco della Primiera*, Venice, 1526. I know no sixteenth-century use of the word *trionfi* to refer to Tarot cards in general, or to the game played with them, although it continued to be used to refer specifically to the triumph cards. Nor do I know any authentic occurrence of the word *tarocchi* before 1516. For an almost certainly spurious one, see Appendix 2 to this chapter.

[41] The word *triumphi* occurs in an ordinance from Reggio nell'Emilia in 1500, forbidding games of chance, including dice and cards, but specifically excepting 'tables' (i.e. backgammon), chess and triumphs (*hoc tamen statuto non comprehendentur ludentes ad tabulas et scachos et triumphos cum cartis*); see W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 79, where, however, the city is mistakenly identified as Reggio di Calabria. Such exceptions were quite frequent, as at Brescia in 1488, Salo in 1489 and Bergamo in 1491 (see W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., pp. 78-9); in all of these cases the expression used was *triumphi* or *ludus triumphorum*. It thus seems clear that the replacement of the word *trionfi* or *triumphi* by the word *tarocchi* occurred some time between 1500 and 1516.

An opinion that has gained some support was first advanced by Robert Steele, namely that the Tarot pack was formed by uniting the regular pack with what had previously been an independent entity, a pack consisting solely of the Matto and the twenty-one triumphs used on their own, and that the early references to *trionfi* should be taken as alluding, not to the composite pack known to us as the Tarot pack, but to this supposed 22-card pack. He based his opinion on the text of the sermon by the anonymous Dominican the manuscript of which was at that time in his possession; indeed, that sermon formed his only ground for that opinion. The preacher inveighed, in his sermon, against three types of game: first dice; then playing cards (*cartulae*); and finally triumphs (*triumphi*). When he comes to the last of these, he lists the twenty-one triumph cards and the Fool, but makes no mention of the suit cards. Now, doubtless, if we knew nothing of the Tarot pack save what we learn from this sermon, we should have no reason to think that a set of *triumphi* consisted of anything but these twenty-two cards. But the fact is that there is no other evidence whatever for the existence of a pack consisting solely of the triumph cards and the Matto; as we have seen, it so happens that every fragmentary Tarot pack that has come down to us includes at least one suit card. The remarks of the Dominican friar provide a very flimsy basis for contradicting the assumption so compellingly suggested by the actual cards that have survived, namely that the triumph cards of the Tarot pack from the first formed only part of a composite or augmented pack, one containing, in addition to them, the four suits of the regular pack. The preacher was not, after all, trying to introduce his congregation to vices with which they were previously unacquainted: he was trying to wean them from what he regarded as vices to which they were already addicted. He therefore did not need carefully to inform them of the precise composition of a *trionfi* pack, something they already knew very well: he was trying, by rhetorical devices, to convince them of his view that all these things – dice, regular playing cards and triumphs – were instruments of the devil; the list of triumph cards evidently served as a memorandum for expatiating on this topic. What more natural than that, having left the subject of regular playing cards, he should, when he turned to denounce triumphs, mention only the cards peculiar to the *trionfi* pack? We may agree that it was primarily to these additional cards that the name *triumphi* applied, without in the least inferring that they ever formed by themselves an independent pack.[42]

Miss Moakley is inclined to the same view as Steele, but adds a further complication: she thinks that there were also packs, consisting solely of picture cards, but different in number and subjects from the triumphs of the Tarot pack, and likewise known as *trionfi*. On her view, the term *trionfi* originally applied to cards of any pack of a certain generic type, one consisting of cards depicting mythological figures, personified abstractions and the like, and only later came to have specific application to a composite pack formed by uniting a particular such series to the regular four-suited pack. That there were, during the fifteenth century, various packs answering to this general description, Miss Moakley undoubtedly establishes. It does not appear, however, that they were, at any time, of widespread use; none of them gained a hold on general taste or remained more than an isolated curiosity. Nor can it be shown that they were in existence at an earlier date than the composite Tarot pack. What is most to the point, however, is that there is no reason to think that the word

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[42] Stuart Kaplan, op. cit., pp. 26, 349, offers a piece of spurious evidence for the Steele thesis, stating that St Anthony, Bishop of Florence, in a *Treatise of Theology* written in 1457 'refers to playing cards and tarot, thus suggesting that the trumps or trionfi were considered a separate game from playing cards, which comprised court cards and numeral or pip cards'. He presumably intends to refer to the *Summa Theologica* of St Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence; Pars 2 (Nuremberg, 1447), chap. 23, of this work does indeed contain several mentions of playing cards, under the alternative names of *cartae* or *naibi*, and their suit-signs (e.g. § viii, 'Unde in cartis sive naibis sunt figure non solum baculorum, denariorum, cupparum, sed et gladiorum'). No mention of *triumphi* is, however, to be found.

trionfi was ever used for any kind of playing cards other than Tarot cards. If Miss Moakley were right, the references to *carte da trionfi* in the account-books of the Ferrara court, from 1442 onwards, might relate, not to Tarot packs, but to others of this more general type; but such a generalised use of the term cannot be substantiated.

The most interesting of the special packs which Miss Moakley claims as examples of *trionfi* in the alleged more general sense, and one to which she draws particular attention, is a set of sixteen picture cards commissioned by Filippo Maria Visconti from the painter Michelino da Besozzo (*fl.* 1394-1442) – a painter, incidentally, to whom the murals of games players in the Casa Borromeo have been attributed by some. This set was sent in 1449 by a Venetian, Jacopo Antonio Marcello, as a present to Queen Isabella, wife of King René I, Duke of Lorraine. It was divided into four groups of four, representing Virtue, Virginity, Riches and Pleasure; each card depicted a suitable classical divinity. The pack has not survived, but the letter to Queen Isabella, written in Latin, describing the pack and saying that Michelino painted it, has.[43] The letter applies the word *ludus* (game) to the set, showing that it was really meant to be used to play some kind of game; but there is no use of the word *triumphi* in reference to the cards.

A celebrated but problematic passage in the life of Filippo Maria Visconti, written in Latin by Pier Candido Dezembrio (1399-1477), runs as follows: 'He was accustomed from his youth to play games of various kinds ... and particularly that type of game in which images are painted, which delighted him to such an extent that he paid 1500 gold pieces for a whole pack (*ludum*) of them, made in the first place by Marziano da Tortona, his secretary, who executed with the utmost diligence images of gods, and placed under them with wonderful skill figures of animals and birds.'[44] There are many oddities about this passage. In the first place, as W.L. Schreiber remarked,[45] playing cards were perfectly well known when Dezembrio was writing, and it is quite obscure why he should choose to describe them as for readers who had never heard of them before. In the second place, even for someone as rich as Filippo Maria Visconti, the price for a single pack seems staggeringly high. In the third place, as remarked by Campori,[46] Marziano is not known to have been a painter, and a funeral oration for him makes no mention of his having been one.[47] However, if the information given by Dezembrio is at all correct, the pack described was presumably not a Tarot pack, which does not normally contain images of gods or pictures of animals and birds. Hence this was probably a pack of the kind Miss Moakley is concerned with; but there is not in Dezembrio's text any use of the word *triumphi*. The word does, indeed, occur in what Campori cites as a contemporary translation into Italian of Dezembrio's life of Visconti, written by someone using the pseudonym Polismagna, the manuscript of which is said by Campori to be preserved in the d'Este library; but it may quite well be that the translator, like others after him, was puzzled by the passage, and assumed that it must refer to some kind of Tarot pack.[48]

Another documentary source cited by Miss Moakley is an inventory of the workshop of the engraver Francesco Rosselli made in 1528.[49] This inventory lists plates for printing a number of remarkable games: the *giuocho del trionfo del petrarcha*; the *giuco d'apostoli chol nostro singnore*; the *giuoco di sete virtù*; and the *giocho di pianeti cho loro fregi* (the game of the triumph of Petrarch; the game of Apostles with our Lord; the game of seven virtues; and the game of planets with their borders). These must, again, have been games with picture cards of special kinds; but they are not labelled, generically, *trionfi*. The name of the first game relates to the poem by Petrarch called *I Trionfi*, and cannot, therefore, fairly be cited in support of a general thesis.

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[43] See Chapter 3, footnote 2.

[44] The passage runs: *Variis autem ludendi modis ab adolescentia usus est ... plerunque eo ludi genere, qui ex imaginibus depictis fit, in quo precipue oblectatus est adeo, ut integrum eorum mille, et quingentis aureis emerit, auctore vel in primis Martiano Terdonensi ejus Sectretario, qui Deorum imagines, subjectasque his animalium figuras, et avium miro ingenio, summaque industria perfecit.* Dezembrio's life is reprinted in L.A. Muratori, *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, vol. XX, Milan, 1731, and the passage will be found in col. 1013.

[45] W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 100.

[46] G. Campori, 'Le Carte da Giuoco dipinte per gli Estensi nel Secolo XV', *Atti e Memorie delle RR. Deputazioni di Storia Patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, vol. 3, Modena, 1874, p. 125, fn. 4.

[47] The funeral oration is printed in Tiraboschi, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. 6, p. 1196.

[48] See G. Campori, op. cit., p. 125, fn. 3. The translation runs: *Alcuna volta zugava a le carte de triumphi. Et di questo giocho molto si delectoe per modo che comparoe uno paro di carte da triumphi compite mille et cinque cento ducati. Di questo maximamente auctore et casone Martinno da Terdona suo secretario, il quale cum meraviglioso inzegno et somma industria compite questo giocho de carte cum le figure et imagine de li dei et cum le figure de li animali et de li ocelli che gli sum sottoposti.*

[49] See. A.M. Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, part I, vol. I, London, 1938, pp. 10, 11, 305-8. The spellings are given as in Hind.

None of the special packs so far mentioned has survived: the only one of this kind that has come down to us from this period is the celebrated copper-engraved set, which exists in two versions, known as the *tarocchi di Mantegna*, about which it is invariably, and correctly, observed that they are neither *tarocchi* nor by Mantegna. They are thought to date from about 1465, and were made by an unknown artist of the Ferrarese school. Many have doubted that this set was used for a game at all, on the ground that existing prints are on paper too flimsy to be used for play; but it is quite likely that it was originally intended for a game of some kind. The set consists of fifty picture cards, divided into five groups of ten each, representing respectively social ranks, Muses, sciences, virtues and the celestial spheres: the cards are individually numbered, and each group is distinguished by a letter. Once again, there is no evidence that they were ever referred to as *trionfi*, although at a later date the term *tarocchi* was attached to them by a vague analogy.[50]

The fact is that games of this kind represent a persistent, and natural, inclination to invent new games to be played with packs of playing cards having a structure entirely different from that of the regular playing-card pack or from an augmented form such as the Tarot pack, an inclination already manifest in the fifteenth century and freely indulged in by games manufacturers to-day. There was a particular vogue for such games in Italy, which lasted through the seventeenth century, as two such packs designed by Mitelli bear witness. In most cases, however, the games invented to play with packs of this kind have no strong attraction to outweigh the disadvantage of having to buy a special pack of cards to play them; often they merely imitate the features of traditional games played with the regular pack. As a result, the packs designed for use in such games prove ephemeral and leave no progeny. The only exception to this is the Cuccú pack, an Italian invention of the seventeenth century which not only exists to this day but spread to other parts of Europe, where it gave rise to the Hexenkarte of Germany, no longer extant, and the Gnav pack of Denmark and Norway and the Killekort of Sweden, both still well known in those countries. This was, and is, used to play a simple and enjoyable game which, in a simplified form, adapted to the regular pack, is known to British children under such names as Ranter Go Round and Catch the Ace. But, of course, this has nothing to do with the Tarot pack, and no-one ever thought of calling these cards *trionfi* or *tarocchi*.

There is thus no reason to suppose that the Tarot triumphs ever formed a separate pack by themselves; and there is still less reason to think that they were ever regarded as just one species of a large genus known, as a whole, as *trionfi*. It is evident that the Tarot pack became immensely popular within a short time after its invention; but the only reasonable hypothesis is that it was from the start a composite pack, containing the four suits of the regular pack alongside the additional cards to which the name *trionfi* properly applies, and that, in connection with playing cards, the word *trionfi*, as used in the fifteenth century, applied only to the Tarot triumphs or, by extension, to Tarot cards as a whole.

There can be no doubt that it was in Italy that the Tarot pack was invented, and there that, throughout the fifteenth century, it was chiefly popular; but the question when it first became known in any other country does not admit of so ready an answer. It was certainly in France that it first became known outside its country of origin; but it is difficult to be precise at what date it was first known there. The earliest certain reference to it there comes from Rabelais in 1534; he includes it, under the spelling *tarau*, in his long list of the games played by Gargantua; *tarots* are again referred to in the posthumous Fifth Book of 1564.[51] The earliest surviving Tarot pack known to have been made outside Italy is one made by Catelin Geoffroy in Lyons in 1557.[52] But we have seen that the term *tarocchi* did not come into use in Italy until after 1500, and we should therefore assume the same to be true of the term *tarots* in France: if there were any reference to the Tarot pack from fifteenth-century France, we should expect it to be by means of some such word as *triumphes*. And indeed we find, once more from an account book, that in 1496 René II, Duke of Lorraine, is reported as having played at *triumphe*;[53] the earliest recorded use of the word in French as the name of a card game dates from as early as 1482.[54] Unfortunately, we cannot be certain that these references are to games played with the Tarot pack. In Italy, after the adoption of the new term *tarocchi*, or perhaps simultaneously with it, the term *trionfi* was transferred to a game played with the regular pack; this new use of the word *trionfi* goes back at least to 1526.[55] In France also there was a very ancient game, played with the regular pack, and known as Triumphe, which is also mentioned by Rabelais. If we conceive of the Tarot pack as not having been introduced into France until after the adoption of the name *tarocchi*, that is, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, so that the cards were never known there otherwise than as *tarots*, then we could interpret these late fifteenth-century references to *triumphe* or *triomphe* as alluding only to the game known from Rabelais's time to the present day under that name. But this supposition, although possible, is unlikely. It implies that the use of the name *'Triumphe'* for a card game in France is unconnected with the contemporary use in Italy of the word *trionfi* for Tarot cards and the games played with them, that it was mere coincidence that two such similar names were used for different things. On this theory, the transference of the term *trionfi* to a game played with the regular pack might have occurred in imitation of the name of the French game also so played, necessitating the introduction of a new word for Tarot cards. This is possible; but it is not probable. For reasons that will not be set out in full until Chapter 7, it is much more likely that no coincidence was involved: that the name *trionfi* was transferred from the Tarot cards to a game played with the regular pack precisely because that game was in part adapted from that which the Tarot pack was used to play, and that the game played in France under the name Triumphe, like other games with similar names in other countries, originated from the dissemination of the same idea. If this is so, then the game known to this day as Triumphe cannot have come into existence until after the term *trionfi* had ceased to be used specifically for Tarot cards; and the fifteenth-century uses of the word *triumphe* or *triomphe* must be taken as referring to a game played with the Tarot pack, whose introduction into France must therefore be dated to at least about 1480. It fits well with this hypothesis that the later reference concerns the court of Lorraine, to which we have noted a pack of playing cards made for the Milanese court being sent as a present some forty-odd years earlier.

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[50] Miss Moakley also suggests that some engravings ascribed to Nicoletto da Modena, illustrated in A.M. Hind, op. cit., vol. VI, 1948, plates 640-7, form part of a pack of cards; but this cannot be so, since they differ considerably in size. The literature on the *tarocchi di* Mantegna is vast: for illustrations, see A.M. Hind, op. cit., vol. IV, 1938, plates 320-69; for a survey of the literature, see D. Hoffmann, op. cit., p. 67. For arguments in favour of regarding them as playing cards, see Fritz Saxl, 'Verzeichniss astrologischen und mythologischen illustrierten Handscrhiften des Lateinischen Mittelalters in Römischen Bibliotheken', *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften*, pp. 101, 222, and Heinrich Brockhaus, 'Ein Edler Geduldspiel "Die Lietung der Welt oder die Himmelsleiter" und die sogenannte Taroks di Mantegna vom Jahre 1459-60', in *Miscellanea di Storia dell'Arte in onore Igino Benvenuto Supino*, 1933, p. 397.

Of the various hand-painted Tarot cards of the fifteenth century, the only ones of which we could not be certain that they came from Italy were the Goldschmidt cards and the two Guildhall pairs, though they had connections both with the Victoria and Albert cards and the Visconti-Sforza pack. Opinions about the provenance of the Goldschmidt cards have been very various. W.L. Schreiber assigned them to Venice, on the strength of his identification of the kneeling lady as a Dogaressa. Eberhard Pinder thought they were made in the Upper Rhine region by an Italian artist. Now the Victoria and Albert cards are surely Italian, if only because of the Italian inscription on the Death card; and it is plain that the painters of the Goldschmidt cards and of the wider Guildhall pair were familiar with the convention used in the Victoria and Albert pack for the representation of the Ace of Cups. Furthermore, if the narrower Guildhall pair really is part of the same original pack as the Goldschmidt cards, the artist must have known the Visconti-Sforza pack, including the later cards not by Bembo. There is therefore good reason for thinking that an Italian artist, or at least one acquainted with Italian cards, was responsible for this pack. Nevertheless, Detlef Hoffmann is surely right in fastening upon the appearance of the Batons in their so-called Spanish form as the most significant clue. Batons on Italian cards of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries may vary somewhat in shape: but they invariably intersect, and, like the Swords (which do not always intersect), they invariably extend the whole length of the card. They are never found disposed, as in Spanish-suited packs and as on the 5 of Batons in the Goldschmidt set, upright and in the manner of the pips on a French-suited card, in separate rows. It seems unthinkable that this pack can have been made for use in fifteenth-century Italy.

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[51] F. Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, book I, ch. 22 and book V, ch. 23.

[52] Seventeen cards from this pack are illustrated in Detlef Hoffmann, op. cit., plates 15(b) and 36(a), nine of them in colour. Nine are illustrated by Kaplan, op. cit., p. 132. The pack is in the Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main, catalogue number K 1.

[53] See H.-R. D'Allemagne, op. cit., vol. II, p. 212. The references occur in the account-books of the court of Lorraine for the year 1495-6, and run respectively:

> Au Roy, le 29 avril pour jouer au triumphe à Vézelise deux francs.
>
> Encore audit seigneur roy le 1r mai pour jouer audit triumphe à Vézelise deux florins d'or.

[54] See F. Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française*, Complément, s.v. 'triomphe'. See also Chapter 9, fn. 2.

[55] In Francesco Berni, *Capitolo del Giuoco della Primiera*.

From the fact that the two Guildhall pairs were discovered in a chest in Seville one might be tempted to believe that the Goldschmidt cards represent an otherwise unknown phenomenon – Spanish Tarot cards. But this would surely be a mistake. As has already been remarked, that variant of the Latin suit-system which was in the course of the sixteenth century adopted as the national suit-system of Spain was not in origin Spanish, but French. What little we know of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Spanish cards suggests that at that time cards made in Spain employed the Latin suit-system in something very much more like what was to become its Portuguese variant, with straight but intersecting Swords and knobbly but intersecting Batons, though doubtless French-made 'Spanish'-suited cards were imported in considerable numbers. It is possible, therefore, that the Goldschmidt cards represent a type of Tarot pack used in some noble house of fifteenth-century France, though there is no need to locate them more narrowly in Provence, as Hoffmann does. They differ too much from anything else that has come down to us, however, for this to be more than a conjecture. Only a single Tarot pack survives to us from sixteenth-century France, that by Catelin Geoffroy already referred to; and this is no guide to the way the suit-signs appeared on early French Tarot packs, since it uses completely non-standard suit-signs. The subjects on the triumph cards are, however, standard, and show no relationship with the enigmatic figures on the Goldschmidt cards. The next earliest French Tarot pack we have is one made in the early seventeenth century; and on this the Swords and Batons are neither of the usual Italian shape, nor of the Spanish one; they do, however, for the most part intersect with one another. In all later French Latin-suited Tarot packs, the Italian suit-system is used. It thus appears that, if the Goldschmidt cards really were made for use in France, they have left no progeny and may have been an isolated experiment; but the data are too sparse to ground a firm opinion. It could, indeed, be argued from the fact that the Tarot pack was later associated so firmly with the Italian version of the Latin suit-system that it cannot have been introduced into France until a time when that suit-system was no longer very familiar, or, at least, no longer seemed quite ordinary, on the ground that otherwise the suit-signs would have undergone the same modification to their 'Spanish' form that was imposed on regular Latin-suited packs in France. Such an argument would rest upon the assumption that we have made that originally the 'Italian' suit-system was everywhere in use. But, even if this assumption and the foregoing argument are correct, this does not threaten our conjecture that the *triumphe* played by Duke René II and the *triumphe* mentioned in 1482 were games played with the Tarot pack, or even that the Goldschmidt cards represent the type of pack that may have been used. The 'Spanish' variation on the Latin suit-system was in existence by about 1460, but it may have been invented earlier; and the Goldschmidt cards might represent an early phase when the Tarot pack was known only in a few aristocratic circles.

In all Tarot packs made outside Italy, the triumph cards bear Roman or Arabic numerals to indicate their position in the sequence; and, in all non-Italian Latin-suited Tarot packs after 1700, except in the Revolutionary period, and in some seventeenth-century ones, they also have their names inscribed in full at the bottom of the card (save for the Death card, whose name is usually missing). The same practice was usually observed for the court cards as well, and often for the Aces. Italian Tarot cards made before the eighteenth century do not carry verbal inscriptions (save for a few non-standard packs, and some occasional mottoes); and even the practice of putting numerals on the triumph cards seems to have come in only gradually. On the sheet in the Rosenwald Collection in Washington, the numbering stops at XII, the top nine cards being left unnumbered; on the sheets at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, the triumph cards are numbered from I to XX, only the top card, the World, being left unnumbered; but, on the sheet in the Cary Collection, and on those in the Rothschild Collection and at the École des Beaux Arts, the triumph cards bear no numerals. There is an incomplete pack in the Bibliothèque Municipale at Rouen from the early sixteenth century, whose triumph cards bear numerals; although a classicised pack, the figures can easily be equated with the usual subjects, unlike in the Sola-Busca *tarocchi*.[56] Count Leopoldo Cicognara knew a complete example of a very similar, though not identical, pack, and illustrated six cards from it in his book of 1831;[57] in his pack, there were no numerals on the triumph cards. The triumphs of the Sola-Busca pack itself do bear numerals. Numerals do not seem to have been an original feature of any of the hand-painted packs: there are numerals on three of the triumph cards at the Castello Ursino in Catania (not on the unidentified one showing the figure on a stag), but these have obviously been added much later; there are also numerals on the triumph cards of the 'Charles VI' set, which are also later additions, although, in their case, they may have been added in the fifteenth century. Otherwise the hand-painted triumph cards are all unnumbered. It should not be thought, however, that the lack of numerals in these packs is evidence that the triumph cards did not originally form an ordered sequence. The sermon quoted by Steele lists them in a definite sequence, even giving their numbers, a sequence that is confirmed by some literary sources of the sixteenth century. It is not that the cards did not have an order, but just that those who used them were expected to remember this order without recourse to enumeration, just as they would know the order of the court cards of any suit without any further aid. It might seem that to keep in mind the order of twenty-one distinct cards is too difficult a feat for people to have been expected to perform; but this supposition can, as it happens, be decisively refuted. The particular form of Tarot pack still used in Bologna, which has changed comparatively little since the sixteenth century, save for becoming double-headed (it was one of the earliest standard patterns to do so), did not, until the mid-eighteenth century, bear numerals on any of the triumph cards at all. Yet, in the game played with this pack (which has also changed very little, at least since the eighteenth century, and, probably, since long before that), the triumph cards have a definite ranking. Eighteenth-century descriptions of this game list the triumph cards by name, and never refer to them by number, and were probably written for players using packs without numerals on the cards. In any case, there is a clear demonstration that the same ranking applied before it was the practice to put numerals on the triumph cards. Before that time, a celebrated geographical Bolognese Tarot pack was designed by Canon Luigi Montieri in 1725: the main body of each triumph card (including the Fool) carried geographical information, and that of each suit card showed coats of arms. (There was a great vogue in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for such instructional packs, particularly geographical and heraldic ones; both regular packs and Tarot packs were designed for this purpose.) In

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[56] The pack is part of the Leber Collection, catalogue number 1351-XIV. Four cards are illustrated in colour in D. Hoffmann, op. cit., plate 23(b), and nine by Kaplan, op. cit., p. 133. Thirty cards survive, including the Fool and seven triumph cards. The latter are to be identified with the usual subjects as follows: Imperator Assiriorum, unnumbered (the numeral is presumably covered up by the turned-over edge) – the Emperor; Pontifex Pontificum, 5 – the Pope; Victoriae Premium. 7 – the Chariot; Omnium Dominatrix, 10 – the Wheel of Fortune;. Rerum Edax (Saturn), 11 – the Hermit (or Time); Perditorum Raptor (Pluto), 14 – the Devil; Inclitum Sydus, 16 – the Star.

[57] See L. Cicognara, op. cit., pp. 163-6 and plate XIV; the cards are also shown in D. Hoffmann, op. cit., fig. 6. The cards illustrated by Cicognara are the Aces of the four suits, Cupid = Love, and Apollo = the Sun. Contrary to what is said by D. Hoffmann, op. cit., p. 68, the pack described by Cicognara was not the same as that at Rouen, though very similar. The Rouen set includes the Aces of Batons, Coins and Swords, and these differ considerably in design from those shown by Cicognara. Also, Cicognara describes the Fool of his pack in detail, and it is quite different from that at Rouen: Cicognara's Fool was a drunkard lying on his back, supporting, with his legs in the air, a jar marked 'Muscatello'; that at Rouen shows a man armed to the teeth, and dressed in armour, but with genitals exposed and urinating, and bears the inscription 'Velim fundam dari mihi'. The Cicognara pack is ascribed by A.M. Hind, op. cit., vol. V, London, 1948, pp. 139-40, to Nicoletto da Modena.

Montieri's pack, the usual symbol giving the denomination of each card was confined to a small panel at the top. In each such panel on the triumph cards is a single letter; when the triumphs are arranged in descending order, with the Fool at the end, these letters spell C LUIGI MONTIERI INVENTOR, a clear indication that, at that time, the triumphs ranked in the same order as that which they have had from the mid-eighteenth century until now.[58] Another famous Bolognese Tarot pack was made (in 1664, according to C.P. Hargrave) for the Bentivogli family by the engraver Gioseppe Maria Mitelli (1634-1718); the engravings were also issued in book form, with ten cards to a page, and the triumph cards are again arranged, in descending order, in the usual sequence.[59] It is thus apparent that, long before the Bolognese triumphs bore numerals, they were arranged in a determinate order, and that, from the early sixteenth until the mid-eighteenth century, players were expected to remember this order. What Bolognese players could do up to the eighteenth century, others could do in the fifteenth. There is therefore no obstacle to supposing that the triumph cards formed, from the outset, a sequence with a definite order.

Why, then, were these cards called 'triumphs'? Many have tried to explain the word from the use of the twenty-one triumph cards in play, namely as 'triumphing' over the other cards; and we cannot say for sure that this explanation is incorrect. A brilliant suggestion of Miss Moakley's is, however, more attractive. This is that the name has nothing to do with the use of the cards, but only with what is shown on them, the series of triumph cards representing a sort of triumphal procession. As documented by Burckhardt and Miss Moakley, a favourite entertainment in the courts of Renaissance Italy was the staging of just such triumphal processions, with floats bearing figures either derived from classical mythology or representing abstractions such as Love, Death, etc.: a transformation of the utterly serious triumph of a Roman general or Emperor into an elegant allegorical entertainment. A frequent ingredient in such Renaissance triumphs was the idea underlying Petrarch's poem *I Trionfi*, in which each successive personified abstraction triumphs over, that is, vanquishes, the last; thus, in the poem, love triumphs over gods and men, chastity over love, death over chastity, fame over death, time over fame and eternity over time. The case would be clinched if it were possible to explain the subjects of the triumph cards of the Tarot pack as forming a triumphal procession of this sort; but in spite of Miss Moakley's determined efforts, supplemented subsequently by those of Mr Ronald Decker, such an explanation, while plausible in principle, is difficult to make convincing in detail. Nevertheless, in default of a better explanation, we may accept it as likely, though by no means certain, that it was this association of ideas which prompted the use of the name 'triumphs' for the additional cards of the Tarot pack.

Appendix 1:
A Problematic Set of Tarocchi

After I had finished this book, and was engaged on final revision, I received a copy, kindly sent me by the author, of Stuart R. Kaplan's *The Encyclopedia of Tarot* (New York, 1978), already referred to. The most valuable feature of the book is the extensive series of illustrations of all the sets of fifteenth-century Italian hand-painted cards, and of many other Tarot packs surviving from before the eighteenth century. I have inserted references to Kaplan's illustrations of the packs discussed in this chapter in the footnotes. I have some disagreements with Kaplan's judgments; to some of these I have drawn attention in the text or the footnotes of this chapter. There is, however, one set of hand-painted Tarot cards illustrated by Kaplan of which I was quite unaware, discussion of which I thought it best to relegate to this appendix.

The set in question comprises twenty-three cards; Kaplan states (p. 106) that the last known owner of the set, before the Second World War, was a British dealer named Rosenthal, and says (p. 99) that in 1939 it was offered to a leading American collector, who refused it because he doubted its authenticity. Kaplan supplies illustrations of all the cards (p. 99); unfortunately, these are rather minute, so that it is difficult to see details even with a magnifying glass. Of the twenty-three cards, eleven closely resemble the corresponding Visconti-Sforza ones: the Emperor, Justice, the Cavalier, Jack, 5 and 4 of Swords, the Queen and Jack of Batons, the King of Cups, and the King and Jack of Coins. Four resemble the Visconti-Sforza cards in general style, but differ in detail: the 5 of Batons, the 5 of Cups, and the 5 and 3 of Coins. The former two differ in the arrangement of the suit-signs, the latter two in the disposition of the scrolls inscribed *a bon droit*, which is the form of the Visconti motto consistently used in this set (the spelling is always *droyt* on the Bembo cards, as on the Tozzi 5 of Swords, though it is *droit* on the Fournier 2 of Coins). Two cards, the Star and the Ace of Cups, are very similar to the Victoria and Albert ones. The Star is almost precisely the same, but the Ace of Cups shows some differences: the Colleoni arms are not parted, there is an inscription I cannot read on the upper scroll, the cliff noted by Kaplan is missing, and, though the stem of the 'cup' or fountain is still inscribed *nec spe nec metu*, the inscription occupies two lines instead of four. Another card in the Rosenthal set shows only the Visconti/Sforza serpent, exactly like the Tozzi card. The remaining five cards are: (i) a Falconer card, very closely resembling no. (20), save for the design on the cape; (ii) a card showing a sun with rays and a face, as on the Goldschmidt and wider Guildhall cards, over a castle, with a wheel and a fleur de lys above the castle on either side, and, at the bottom, a scroll inscribed *Fortezza* (a word which may mean either 'fortress' or 'fortitude'); (iii) an Ace of Swords, showing a dagger dripping blood, and, at the bottom, part of a sun with an inscription I cannot read, and two scrolls higher up on the card, marked *a bon droit* and, apparently, *REPUB*; (iv) a Cavalier of Batons, like the Visconti-Sforza one but laterally reversed, and with a three-turreted castle in the top left-hand corner, encircled by an inscription I cannot read, and an unidentifiable object in the top right-hand corner; and (v) an Ace of Coins, showing a cardinal in the Coin, and, according to Kaplan, an inscription, not visible in the illustration.

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[58] The Montieri cards are illustrated in *Playing Cards of Various Ages and Countries Selected from the Collection of Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, vol. III, London, 1895, plates 74-9, with notes pp. 13-15. There is also a reproduction pack issued by the Edizioni del Solleone in Lissone in 1973, edited by Signor Vito Arienti and illustrated by Kaplan, op. cit., p. 147.

[59] Two of the Mitelli cards are illustrated in C.P. Hargrave, op. cit., opp. p. 232; see also opp. p. 99 in 1966 edition; twenty-four are shown in Kaplan, op. cit., p. 54. The book version was issued as *Giuoco di Carte con nuova forma di Tarocchini; Intaglio in Rame di Gioseppe Maria Mitelli*, and was reprinted in 1970 by Huber und Herpel of Offenbach am Main as Gioseppe Maria Mitelli, *Bologneser Tarockspiel des 17. Jahrhunderts*. C.P. Hargrave, *A History of Playing Cards*, New York, 1930, 1966, p. 232, confidently cites the date 1664, but gives no authority for doing so.

It is very hard to draw conclusions about this extraordinary set from Kaplan's diminutive illustrations, taken from a photograph in his possession; they deserve publication in colour and in full size (though Mr Kaplan does not know their measurements). The salient reason for supposing the suspicions of the American collector who refused to buy them to be justified is the figure of the cardinal on the Ace of Coins; it looks very much like an attempt to establish the set as really being, at last, from the pack supposedly painted for Ascanio Sforza. However, the style of this Ace of Coins seems totally unlike that of the rest of the set; it is possible, therefore, that it is a forged addition to an otherwise genuine set. A more subtle reason for doubt lies in the form of the Colleoni arms on the Ace of Cups; here the device takes the later form of three inverted hearts, not of three pairs of *coglioni* (testicles), as on the Victoria and Albert card and other contemporary presentations of these arms, for instance in the Colleoni chapel at Bergamo (see footnote 25). This strongly suggests that the Rosenthal cards could not have been painted in the fifteenth century.

If the set should nevertheless prove to be genuine (perhaps with the exception of the Ace of Coins), it would establish the most interesting links between other surviving sets of fifteenth-century Tarot cards. First, it would supply an original for the Falconer card (no. 20), and from a Tarot pack, though whether it represented the Bagatto, or even the Fool, or some distinct alternative triumph subject, would remain obscure; this would increase the probability that the Goldschmidt cards are also genuinely from a Tarot pack. Secondly, it would establish the sun with a face as a device employed on various Milanese Tarot cards, and thus would make it less likely that the Goldschmidt cards or the wider Guildhall pair had a non-Italian origin; the significance of this sun would remain problematic. Thirdly, it would provide further examples of the practice of placing small emblems in the upper corners of cards, a practice that would still be baffling.

Whether genuine or forged, the set poses some new puzzles of its own. What is the significance of the inscription *REPUB* on the Ace of Swords? On the death of Filippo Maria Visconti in 1447, the citizens of Milan, tired of their Dukes, as well they might be, declared a republic; in 1450, however, Francesco Sforza captured the city and proclaimed himself Duke. Can this card be meant to contain an allusion to the bloody suppression of the short-lived republic? The card inscribed *Fortezza* cannot, in view of the inscription, represent the Sun; if the card is genuine, this provides corroboration of the view that the sun on the Guildhall card we took to be the Ace of Swords and on the unidentified Goldschmidt card is not, in either case, the feature of the card determining its identity. The *Fortezza* card, if spurious, may be meant to represent the Tower; but, if genuine, it can hardly do so, because that card, although it went under various names and had many representations, is never called *la Fortezza*, or even *la Torre*, in early Italian sources. It is much more likely to represent Fortitude, by a kind of visual pun, even though this subject is normally represented by a personification; *la Fortezza* is the name invariably given to this subject in the early sources, as against the name *la Forza* (Strength) usually employed in the later Tarot de Marseille-derived packs. It is hard to avoid being impressed by this card. Unlike most of those in the set, it is not a close copy of some other existing card. If we suppose it a forgery, then to suppose it intended to represent the Tower is to attribute a very crude mistake to the forger. If we regard it as representing Fortitude, on the other hand, it becomes an ingenious and unexpected representation of its subject, and presupposes enough knowledge of the literary sources on the part of any forger responsible for it for him to be aware that the regular word used for the Fortitude card in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was *Fortezza*. These considerations seem to me to weigh in favour of the authenticity of the set; and, if the *Fortezza* card is genuine, the lady with the model castle in the Goldschmidt set may be another deviant version of Fortitude.

It thus becomes a matter of some importance for the study of fifteenth-century hand-painted *tarocchi* to determine whether any or all of the Rosenthal cards are genuine, and, as a first step, where they are. Mr Albi Rosenthal, of Oxford and London, who is presumably the British dealer referred to by Kaplan, has informed me that in the 1920s his father sold some hand-painted Italian *tarocchi* to Herr von Hardt of Switzerland, but does not know where the von Hardt collection is now. He has also told me that at a later date some fifteenth-century hand-painted *tarocchi* were shown to him at his Curzon Street office in London, but that these were definitely found to be forgeries. Which of these two sets, if either, is that designated 'the Rosenthal cards' by Kaplan is unclear. It is to be hoped that the cards themselves, or at least some more detailed illustrations of them, become available for examination; in the meantime, we owe a considerable debt to Mr Kaplan for bringing the set to public attention.

Appendix 2: *The Tarocchi of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza*

In Count Leopoldo Cicognara, *Memorie spettanti alla Storia della Caliografia*, Prato, 1831, p. 16, there is quoted an alleged excerpt from the Chronicle of Cremona by Domenico Bordigallo. The excerpt is in Italian, and states that in the year 1484 the excellent painter Antonio Cicognara (of the same family as the Count) painted *uno magnifico mazzo de carte dette de' Tarocchi, da me veduto* (a magnificent pack of the cards called *tarocchi*, seen by me) for Cardinal Ascanio Sforza. Count Cicognara says that this passage was communicated to him by Mgr Antonio Dragoni from the *schede* (notes) of Giacomo Torresino, an eighteenth-century Cremonese antiquarian. On the strength of this passage, numerous art historians have ascribed various hand-painted Tarot cards of the fifteenth century to Antonio Cicognara, including the six cards of the Visconti-Sforza pack that are not by Bembo; but the passage is almost certainly spurious. Any historical document connected with Dragoni is under the gravest suspicion, since he was either a forger or the dupe of forgers, although he was primarily concerned with documents relating to the Dark Ages, of which he made, or manufactured, a large collection. Torresino did indeed compose notes on local history, using a page for each year, and entering quotations relating to that year from various sources; but this work, at any rate in the form in which it survives in the Biblioteca Statale at Cremona, stops before 1484. Bordigallo's Chronicle was written in Latin, and has never been published; the manuscript was located by Signor Marco Santambrogio, of the University of Bologna, in the Biblioteca Treccani in Milan, where, with the kind assistance of Signora Carla Treccani degli Alfieri, he examined it; he found that, while the entry for 1484 does contain a reference to Ascanio Sforza, namely to record that it was in that year that he was created a Cardinal, it mentions neither Antonio Cicognara nor *tarocchi*. It is conceivable that the quotation was in some later section of Torresino's notes that has since been lost, but from some other source, or that it is in Bordigallo's Chronicle, but under a later year (Ascanio Sforza died in 1505); but the probability is that it is quite inauthentic. In any case, the use of the modern word *mazzo* for 'pack' was, so far as I am aware, unknown in fifteenth-century Italian, which uses *paro* or *gioco* instead; so, even if the Italian given by Count Cicognara is a translation of some genuine Latin original, the word *tarocchi* is not likely to have occurred in that original. See M. Dummett, 'A Note on Cicognara', *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. II, no. 1, August 1973, pp. 14-17 (original issue), pp. 23-32 (reissue), and 'More about Cicognara', ibid., vol. V, no. 2, pp. 26-34. These two articles are cited by Stuart R. Kaplan in his annotated bibliography (*The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, New York, 1978, p. 356), but he mentions only their discussion of the Fibbia portrait, not of the Bordigallo Chronicle. Mr Kaplan does, however, state categorically (pp. 33, 351) that the Chronicle contains no reference either to *tarocchi* or to Antonio Cicognara. Though I consider this quite probable, I cannot vouch for it, since Signor Santambrogio had time to examine only the section dealing with the year 1484, and I have not yet seen the manuscript myself. From the absence of acknowledgment to myself or to Signor Santambrogio, the reader might naturally suppose that Mr Kaplan was speaking on his own authority and had examined the Chronicle in more detail than Santambrogio had done; but this seems unlikely in view of his mistaken assertion (p. 33) that it was in 1484 that Bordigallo wrote his Chronicle, since anyone who had seen it would have observed that the entries go beyond that year. From his curious statement (p. 374) that Torresino's notes contain Bordigallo's Chronicle, it is equally unlikely that he has seen them. Mr Kaplan expresses the belief (pp. 100, 107) that the initials 'A.C.' on the Tozzi King of Swords may stand, not for 'Antonio Cicognara', but for 'Ascanio Cardinale'; this seems somewhat illogical, since Count Cicognara's purported quotation from Bordigallo is the only positive evidence either that Antonio Cicognara painted any *tarocchi* or that any were painted for Ascanio Sforza, and Mr Kaplan agrees that the quotation is spurious. His assertion of its inauthenticity occurs during a list (pp. 31-3) of spurious sources, and is repeated in the bibliography; in the section discussing the authorship and dates of the hand-painted packs (pp. 106-7), he cites the purported Bordigallo quotation in full, without, indeed, endorsing it, but without repudiating it either; only the most alert reader is likely to remember the earlier declaration of disbelief in it. Of course, it is perfectly plausible that Ascanio Sforza should have had some *tarocchi* made for him. But, ever since 1831, the names of Antonio Cicognara and of Ascanio Sforza have been endlessly cited, in books, articles and museum catalogues, in connection with *tarocchi*, and it is in my view best to make no further reference to those two individuals until some genuine evidence of such a connection becomes available.

	Swords	Batons	Cups	Coins	Approx. size
(1) Vis. di Mod.	A–10	A–10	A–10	A, 2, 4–10	190 x 90
(2) Brambilla	A–10	A–6, 8–10	A–10	A–10	180 x 90
(3) Vis.–Sforza	A, 2, 4–10	A–10	A–10	A–10	175 x 87
(5) Rothschild	2–8, 10	3–10	2, 5–9	6	188 x 90
(7) Catania	7, 8	6, 9	A, 10	2, 7, 8	180 x 90
(8) Tozzi	5				170 x 87
(9) Turin	A, 3, 6, 7, 10	6, 10	4, 9	A, 3	? 198 x 94
(10) Fournier		7		A, 2, 8	171 x 87
(11) Correr	A	2	4	4	180 x 93
(12) V. & A.			A		167 x 85
(14) Guildhall (wide)	A		A		138 x 72
(19) Goldschmidt	A	5	A		140 x 66
Rosenthal	A, 4, 5	5	A, 5	A, 3, 5	?
(22) Rosenwald	A–9	A–9	A–9	A–9	
(24) Cary sheet		7, 8			

	(1) Vis.-di Mod.	(2) Bram.	(3) Vis.-Sf.	(4) Ch.VI	(5) Roths.	(5a) Bassano	(6) d'Este	(7) Catania	(8) Tozzi	(9) Turin	(12) V. & A.	(13b) Biedak	(13c) Marzoli	(15) Guildhall (narrow)	(16) Warsaw	(17) Hanover	(18) Andreoletti	Rosenthal	(21) Met.	(22) Rosenwald Sheet B19823	Sheets B19821 - 2
— King	x		x				x	x	x												x
Queen	x		x		x		x												x	x	
Knight			x			x	x			x								x	x		x
Dame	x																				
Jack			x	x					x							x		x	x		x
Maid	x																				
— King		x	x		x														x		x
Queen	x	x	x		x		x											x	x		
Knight		x	x		x		x											x	x		x
Dame	x																				
Jack	x		x		x		x						x	?				x			x
Maid	x																				
King	x		x						x			x						x			x
Queen			x				x								x					x	
Knight	x	x	x						x										x		x
Dame																					
Jack	x	x	x					x	x										x		
Maid	x																				x
— King	x		x		x		x											x	x		x
Queen	x		x						x										x	x	
Knight	x	x													x				x		x
Dame	x																				
Jack		x	x		x						x					x	x	x			
Maid	x																				x
ox. size	190x90	180x90	175x87	195x110	188x90	190x90	140x78	180x90	170x87	198x94 A Knight & two Jacks of unidentifiable suits	167x85	170x86	170x85	141x66	169x83	173x95	140x66	?			

	(1) Vis. di Mod.	(2) Bram	(3) Vis.–Sf.	(4) Ch. VI	(5) Roths.	(6) d'Este	(7) Catania	(8) Tozzi	(10) Fournier	(12) V. & A.	(13) Four./ Marz./ Bied.	(15) Guildhall (narrow)	Rosenthal	(21) Met.	(22) Rosenwald	(23) Roths/ Beaux Arts	(24) Cary
Fool			x	x		x											?
Bagatto			x			x							?	x	x		x
Empress	x		x											x	x		x
Emperor	x	x	x	x	x				x				x	x	x		x
Popess			x								x			x	x		x
Pope			x	x		x		x						x	x		?
Love	x		x	x										x	x		?
Temperance			x	x		x	?	x						x	x		x
Fortitude	x		x	x									?	x	x		x
Justice			x	x									x	x	x		
Faith	x																
Hope	x																
Charity	x																
Wheel		x	x					x						x	x	x	x
Chariot	x		x	x			x	x						x	x	x	x
Hermit			x	x			x							x	x	x	
Hanged Man			x	x										x	x	x	
Death	x		x	x						x				x	x	x	
Devil														x	x	x	x
Tower				x										x	x	x	x
Star			x			x				x			x		x	x	x
Moon			x	x		x								?	x	x	x
Sun			x	x		x								x	x	x	x
World	x		x	x		x	x					x		x	x	x	
Judgment	x		x	x				x						x	x	x	
Approx. size	190x90	180x90	175x87	195x110	188x90	140x78	180x90	170x87	171x87	167x85	170x85-6	141x66	?				

CHAPTER 5

Cartomancy

The regular pack came first: the Tarot pack was formed from it, sixty-odd years after the first appearance of the regular playing-card pack in Europe, by adding twenty-two cards of a quite different kind, as well as an extra court card in each suit. For what purpose was the Tarot pack thus created? Many people would take it for granted that it was devised either for use in fortune-telling or to embody some esoteric meaning connected with the occult sciences. Like most of what is generally believed about the Tarot pack, this answer is completely wrong.

Fortune-telling with playing cards is as familiar to us as the casting of horoscopes and the reading of palms; and so we naturally tend to assume that it is an employment of them as ancient as their use in play. It is quite common, for instance, for scholarly writers to suggest, without a shred of evidence, that some kind of playing-card pack – say the Mamlūk pack – was used for divination: it does not occur to them that they need any evidence for such a suggestion, any more than evidence is needed that swords were used for fighting. This attitude is quite mistaken. The term 'occult science' is not misplaced: people who maintain a serious belief in the possibility of unveiling the future or of exercising supernormal powers do so because the efficacy of the methods they employ coheres with some systematic conception which they hold of the way the universe functions. Behind each seriously credited method of divination lies a whole theory, a theory which, however flimsy its empirical basis, attempts to discern a systematic connection between diverse phenomena just as much as does one to which we accord the status of a scientific theory. People who are serious in what they are about, therefore, will not normally employ, as instruments of divination, any random artefact that comes to hand: they will employ only such things as appear to them to have cosmic significance. It is not until fortune-telling has degenerated into mere superstition, not until it has come to be indulged in by people who do not actually believe in it, but have not the strength of mind to disbelieve, and to be practised by those for whom it is no more than a livelihood, that it can employ methods, like inspecting tea-leaves, unsupported by any theory that ascribes to its instruments a critical role in the unfolding of events.

It is a mistake to assimilate magical theories and magical practices too closely to scientific ones, to regard magic as simply a kind of erroneous science: they have their own character, their own flavour, which distinguish them from science independently of the empirical evidence; there have, after all, been plenty of mistaken scientific theories, and, for that matter, intellectually corrupt or plain silly scientific theories, which, for all that they were ill-founded, do not tempt us to characterise them as magical. Magic has the glamour of the fruit of the tree of knowledge: the lure of the forbidden and the lure of power. One who possesses this secret knowledge knows what it is not given to men to know; and, with his knowledge, he can control events because he has access to the primal forces that direct the workings of the universe. But, although the pursuit of magical knowledge and of magical skill is likely to corrupt not only the character but the intellect, it is equally a mistake to expect magical doctrine and magical practice to make no coherent sense whatever, to be a mere jumble of palpable absurdities. On the contrary, in the heyday of magic in Europe, that is, during the Renaissance, magical doctrine formed a coherent and subtle intellectual system which commanded the adherence of many gifted individuals; indeed, recent historical research has demonstrated how intertwined were these beliefs with the early development of modern science. In this system of beliefs, playing cards – whether those of the Tarot pack or those of the regular pack – had no role to play whatsoever; they belonged to a completely different order.

As their name implies, playing cards (*chartae lusoriae, cartes à jouer, Spielkarten, carte da giuoco*) were from the first seen as instruments of play, like chess pieces. As long as magic was taken seriously, therefore, as long as it retained pretensions to intellectual respectability, it was not likely to occur to anyone to use playing cards for divinatory purposes. It thus should not be surprising that the practice of telling fortunes by means of ordinary playing cards is not heard of in Europe until the eighteenth century. There may be cited, to rebut this, a Flemish painting of 'Philip the Good consulting the Fortune-teller', supposedly depicting the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good (1396-1467), having his fortune read by a woman who has for the purpose laid the cards out on the table. This painting is referred to in many books and articles; and, if the description of it were correct, it would indeed show that fortune-telling with cards was practised in Europe from quite early times. The story proves, however, to be yet another of those many cases, particularly common in the literature on playing cards, in which one writer has copied another without troubling to verify the statement he is retailing. Dr Detlef Hoffmann has succeeded in tracking down both the original source of the story and the painting on which it is based.[1] The story originated in 1842 in an article in a French magazine, in which the picture was given the title quoted above, and an engraving of it was reproduced with the article.[2] The picture itself is an oil painting, of the school of Lucas van Leyden, in the Museum at Nantes. As Dr Hoffmann observes, a number of minor differences between the original painting and the engraving of it combine to give divergent impressions of what is going on. The painting indeed shows a woman seated at a table handling cards, but much less of the table is shown, and there is no reason to suppose that she is not taking part in a card game the other participants in which are out of the picture. In both the painting and the engraving, the woman is taking a lily from (or handing one to) a young man standing on her right, who is doffing his cap to her; but, in the painting, he is standing much closer to her and in a less suppliant attitude. Dr Hoffmann interprets the painting as showing the prodigal son squandering his substance on riotous living. I confess that the people depicted do not appear very riotous to me; but, whatever the painting represents, there is nothing whatever to indicate that any fortune-telling is taking place, nor, so far as I know, any evidence that the title 'Philip the Good consulting the Fortune-teller' was ever given to the picture before 1842.

A genuine exception to the rule that fortune-telling with ordinary playing cards is unknown in Europe before the eighteenth century is provided by a book by Francesco Marcolino da Forlí entitled *Giardino di pensieri* and published in Venice in 1540. The book is indeed intended solely to provide a means of foretelling the future by the use of playing cards. It constitutes, however, precisely the sort of exception of which it is said that it proves the rule, since the procedure involved bears scarcely any resemblance to the practice of fortune-telling with cards as we understand it. The pack to be used is the Italian-suited regular pack, shortened to 36 cards as for the game of Trappola by the omission of the 3 to 6 from every suit; but, although all 36 cards are used, the suits do not matter, but only the ranks, and the cards illustrated in the book are taken only from the suit of Coins. What makes the process so different from anything done by modern fortune-tellers is that the book is not a mere instruction manual, but is itself integral to the procedure. In the front of the book there is a list of questions, some for men, some for women, some for either, of which one must be selected by the person using the book; for instance, whether the lady he loves loves him. Against each question is the number of a further page of the book that he must then turn to. On this page are arranged representations of all the forty-five pairs of cards that can be drawn from the 36-card pack, ignoring suits and the order of the two cards. The enquirer then draws two cards from the pack, and looks at the appropriate entry on the page; this instructs him to turn to another page, and to one of five sections (four squares and a cross) on that page. In that section are depicted each of the nine single cards that may be drawn (ignoring suits); so he draws one more card and looks at the appropriate entry in the section. This assigns him one card (not necessarily the one he drew), and instructs him to turn to yet another page, a double one. On this double page are again depicted various different pairs of cards (again ignoring suits and order); so the enquirer draws one further card, combines it with the one he was assigned, and looks at the entry on the double page which shows this pair of cards. There, at last, he will read a verse tercet giving him the answer to his question: for instance, that the lady loves him at present, but is fickle, so that he could lose her affections if he does not take care.

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[1] Detlef Hoffmann and Erika Kroppenstedt, *Wahrsagekarten*, catalogue of an exhibition of fortune-telling cards held at Bielefeld in 1972, p. 8 and figs. 5 and 6, p. 10.

[2] 'Musées et Collections Particulières des Départments: Musée de Nantes', *Le Magasin Pittoresque*, vol. 10, 1842, pp. 228-9, 291-2, 324-5. The illustration is on p. 324, with the caption 'Musée de Nantes – Philippe-le-Bon consultant une tireuse de cartes, par Van Eyck'; the text more cautiously says, 'On croit que cette peinture représente le duc de Bourgogne Philippe-le-Bon consultant une tireuse de cartes.' There is no reason to think that the anonymous author of the article intended any deception; probably the engraver was unconsciously influenced by the interpretation he thought the artist intended.

This light-hearted diversion has nothing to do with the occult, and it is impossible to imagine anyone taking it seriously as an oracle. No symbolic significance is attributed to any individual cards: the cards are used simply as a randomising device; and, in fact, Marcolino's book had a much less elegant predecessor, the *Triompho di Fortuna* by Sigismondo Fanti, published in Venice in 1524, which embodies essentially the same idea, save that the enquirer rolls dice instead of drawing cards. The mere existence of the book is itself a proof that there was no general practice of telling fortunes with cards then in existence; for, if there had been, the author of such a work would surely have made some show of conforming to it, instead of employing so jejune a method. In any case, Marcolino's book was never imitated. An earlier German work, entitled *Eyn loszbuch ausz der Karten gemacht*, originally printed in Mainz between 1505 and 1510, bears even less resemblance to cartomancy in the accepted sense.[3] This is a volume of a type very popular in Germany in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. On each page is printed a design for one of the cards from a German-suited 48-card pack, together with an eight-line verse oracle foretelling the enquirer's general destiny in life; some are very encouraging, some extremely menacing.[4] One could use the book by drawing a single card from a pack, and turning to the corresponding page; but the book was not in fact designed to make even that use of any actual cards necessary, because there is at the front of the book a disc with a pointer; the disc is attached to the page only at its centre, and on the page itself is a circle divided into forty-eight sectors, each labelled with the name of a card. The enquirer was therefore supposed to spin the disc and turn to the page indicated by the pointer when it came to rest. The very crude type of oracular practice exemplified by this book is not cartomancy, but the use of a *Losbuch*: several other *Losbücher* of the time are known, and all of them work in the same way, by spinning a disc with a pointer; but most of them are not based on the playing-card pack, but on some other set of objects, such as animals.[5] What we have is merely an unsophisticated method of fortune-telling by spinning a disc and consulting a page in a book; the fact that, in this particular such book, it is playing cards that are used to illustrate the oracles is of no especial significance.

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[3] A copy is in the British Museum. A photolithographic reproduction, with introduction by A. Hofmeister, was published in Rostock in 1890.

[4] For instance, the last couplet of the verse for the Unter of Leaves reads:

Darvmb must du verderben
Und als ein beller sterben

of which a rough translation might be

Therefore is your ruin nigh
You must as a beggar die.

[5] Dr Hellmut Rosenfeld has shown, in fact, that the verses in the Mainz *Losbuch* were adapted from one published in Basle in 1485, in which the 52 oracles were illustrated by different animals; he thinks that the Mainz book may have been a re-edition of one published in Ulm. See H. Rosenfeld, 'Losbücher vom Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts', *Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel*, vol. 17, 1961, pp. 2381-6 or *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, vol. IV, 1961, pp. 1117-26, and 'Das Mainzer Kartenlosbuch von 1510 und die Spielkartentradition', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, 1962, pp. 212-18. For a facsimile of the animal *Losbuch*, see Ernst Voullième (ed.), *Losbuch: ein scherzhaftes Wahrsagebuch gedruckt von Martin Flach in Basel um 1485*, Berlin, 1923. In the catalogue for the exhibition of playing cards held in the Albertina Gallery in Vienna in 1974, *Spielkarten: ihre Kunst und Geschichte in Mitteleuropa*, p. 229, Dr Fritz Koreny maintains that the Mainz *Losbuch* is to be dated 1495-1500.

These inessential exceptions apart, fortune-telling was simply not one of the uses to which playing cards were put in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At the end of the seventeenth century, a special pack was issued in England for the sole purpose of telling fortunes: its earliest recorded publication, which was very probably the original one, was by Dorman Newman in 1690. The plates for this pack were later taken over by the cardmaker John Lenthall, who made new ones for some of the cards; Lenthall was apprenticed to William Warter in 1699, had become his partner by 1708 and gained sole possession of the business in 1709. Lenthall is celebrated for the production of a variety of instructional packs, several of which were in fact reissues of earlier packs, including some by Warter, and his name has come to be attached to all of them, among them the fortune-telling pack generally referred to as 'Lenthall's' in the literature on playing cards.[6] Each of the cards of this pack bore, in an upper panel, one of the suit-signs of the French suit-system and a Roman numeral from I to XIII, together with a name (Pharoh, Wat Tyler, Dido, Merlin, Dr Faustus, etc.). The body of each card carried a design relating solely to its use for fortune-telling; as Dr Hoffmann justly remarks, what we have here is essentially a transference of the method of Marcolino's book to a pack of cards, since the questions and answers, and, in clue form, the intermediate instructions, are printed on the cards themselves.[7] This represents a step towards the practice of fortune-telling with ordinary playing cards, in that it liberates the user from having to consult a book; but it is not yet a very great step, since the use of a quite special pack is still essential. Of fortune-telling with ordinary cards, not specially designed for the purpose, I have found no evidence from before the eighteenth century.[8]

Now, it may be said, that is all very well: but Tarot cards are not *ordinary* playing cards, and the Tarot pack may have been designed for fortune-telling, even though it took another three hundred years before anyone thought of using the regular pack for that purpose. Just the opposite is the case: it was only in the 1780s, when the practice of fortune-telling with regular playing cards had been well established for at least two decades, that anyone began to use the Tarot pack for cartomancy. It is clear from what was said above that the Tarot pack was not invented in an environment in which the use of cards of any kind for fortune-telling was a known practice. If, therefore, it had been intended for such a completely novel use, then, among the numerous references to it from the fifteenth and, especially, the sixteenth century, there would surely have been many that alluded to that use.

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[6] E.S. Taylor, *The History of Playing Cards*, London, 1865, p. 209, states that John Lenthall was active between 1665 and 1685; this statement has been accepted by a number of writers on playing cards. It is corrected by Harold and Virginia Wayland, 'John Lenthall: Purveyor of Playing Cards', *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, August 1972, pp. 2-3. In 'Lenthall Pack No. XVIII' the same *Journal*, vol. VII, no. 1, August 1978, pp. 12-21, the same authors identify Dorman Newman as the former and probably the original publisher of the fortune-telling cards and the date of his publication of them as 1690; they also record the date of John Lenthall's baptism as 1683, and the earliest notice of his reissuing the fortune-telling pack as 1711. They also provide some illustrations of the pack; further illustrations, with an account of the pack, are to be found in D. Hoffmann and E. Kroppenstedt, op. cit., pp. 84-7; the authors mistakenly accept Taylor's attribution of the original pack to John Lenthall, and date it to about 1670, whereas it was twenty years later than this.

[7] The enquirer selected one of the questions printed on the four Kings, marked XIII; he was thereby directed to one of the odd numeral cards (i.e. numbered I, III, V, VII or IX). This showed a circle divided into thirteen sectors: he drew one card from the remainder of the pack, looked at the sector corresponding to its number (disregarding the suit), and this yielded a word and numeral by means of which he could identify one of the books depicted on the various Jacks and Queens (cards numbered XI and XII). Each such book bore the name of a Sibyl, and each even-numbered numeral card (II, IV, VI, VIII or X) was named after a Sibyl; he therefore looked at the appropriate Sibyl card. This bore thirteen numbered answers: he read off the answer corresponding to the number of the card he had drawn. In this procedure, the intervention of the Jacks and Queens is, of course, quite redundant – a superfluous piece of business put in to conceal the essential triviality of the whole process.

[8] In *Wahrsagekarten*, p. 10, Dr Hoffmann makes mention of a painting by an unknown artist of the second half of the seventeenth century, which apparently shows a woman in the process of 'reading the cards'; he states that the picture is illustrated in *Die Weltkunst*, vol. XXX, 1960, p. 5. Unfortunately, I have not been able to see this periodical, and remain somewhat sceptical whether both the date and the interpretation of this painting can be correct. The comte de Résie, in his *Histoire et Traité des Sciences Occultes*, vol. 2, Paris, 1857, p. 158, asserts categorically that fortune-telling with playing cards was unknown in France before 1750.

Instead, when anything is said about the use of the Tarot cards at all, they are spoken of as the instruments of play in just the same way as regular playing cards. Moreover, if the invention of the Tarot pack constituted the invention of cartomancy, it would be incredible that fortune-telling with regular playing cards should have grown up in the halting and gradual fashion that I have recounted. A century after the invention of the Tarot pack, we have Marcolino's book, embodying a method of fortune-telling in which the cards are used only as an auxiliary randomising device to determine, at critical moments, to which page of the book to turn next, and in which no symbolic significance is attributed to the cards themselves. At the time when that book was published, the Tarot pack was exceedingly well known in Italy, and was the subject of numerous literary allusions and conceits. Is it likely that, if the principal use of that pack was for fortune-telling in the modern manner, Marcolino should even have thought of his method, or that, if he had, he should not have remarked, in his preface, on its difference from the supposedly well known practice of cartomancy with the Tarot cards? It took another hundred and fifty years before Dorman Newman took the next step of having a special pack designed in which the cards themselves served in place of the pages of the book, cards bearing the questions, the answers and the instructions for the intermediate steps. During those hundred and fifty years, we have not a single reference, from any source, to cartomancy, either with regular cards, with Tarot cards or with any other type of pack.[9] It does not seem likely that if, despite this lack of evidence, cartomancy with cards that carried no printed questions, instructions or answers had already been in existence for two hundred and fifty years, anyone would have wanted to have recourse to such a jejune device as that represented by 'Lenthall's' pack: it would have seemed at the time as laughably unsophisticated as it does to us now. The Tarot pack was, indeed, little known in England, but it was not completely unknown there,[10] and it was well enough known in France: if its principal uses were for fortune-telling, a use to which the regular pack had not yet been put, then it would, by that time, have established itself as the type of pack to be used for such a purpose, and Lenthall and his predecessor would have been printing the Tarot pack or some variation on it.

If the Tarot pack had been used from the start for cartomancy, it is much more likely that, over two centuries after its invention, the methods employed for fortune-telling with Tarot cards would long ago have been adapted to the use of the regular pack. What principally interest occultists and those who employ the Tarot pack for fortune-telling are, of course, the twenty-one triumph cards, together with the Fool – the twenty-two cards they refer to as 'the Major Arcana'. The fifty-six suit cards – called by them 'the Minor Arcana' – are something of an embarrassment to them: they do not look very mysterious, and cease to look mysterious at all as soon as one knows that the suit-symbols used are not special to the Tarot pack; they do not carry any readily assignable symbolic significance; and they resemble regular playing cards too closely for one bent on the evocation of mystery to be very comfortable with them. For this reason, several methods of fortune-telling with the Tarot pack employ the twenty-two 'Major Arcana' only; and the thesis that it was for use in fortune-telling that the Tarot pack was invented would look a great deal more plausible if the pack had originally contained no suit cards at all. Unfortunately for the thesis, there is, as we have seen, no reason whatever to suppose that the twenty-two additional cards ever formed a separate pack: they were devised, from the start, to form part of a composite pack. This being so, if it is to be supposed that the Tarot pack was invented for fortune-telling purposes, it must from the outset have been the composite pack that was so used. In that case, however, the method of fortune-telling employed must have been one that assigned a cartomantic significance to the suit cards; and it must therefore have been a method which allowed of fairly ready adaptation to fortune-telling with the regular pack. Such a hypothesis makes it incomprehensible that it should not be until the eighteenth century that we hear anything at all of fortune-telling with regular playing cards, and then without any suggestion that this practice was adapted from a similar one with Tarot cards, or that there should ever have been such crude experiments in that direction as are represented by Marcolino's book and by Lenthall's fortune-telling pack.

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[9] Detlef Hoffmann points out that Caspar Peucer's *Commentarius de praecipuis Diviniationum generibus*, Servesta, 1591, makes no mention of cartomancy (D. Hoffmann and E. Kroppenstedt, op. cit., p. 9); the same point was made by Romain Merlin, *L'Origine des cartes à jouer*, Paris, 1869, p. 17 fn. The point is an extremely strong one, since Peucer's book is a painstakingly thorough survey of all known methods of foretelling the future. Peucer was born in 1523, and was Professor of Medicine at Wittenberg and married the daughter of Melancthon. The first edition of the *Commentarius* was published in Wittenburg in 1553; there was a new edition, revised by the author in 1560, many times re-printed; the 1591 edition was also revised and enlarged by the author, and was reissued at Frankfurt in 1593 and at Hanover in 1607. A French translation, *Les Devins ou commentaire des principales sortes de devinations*, was published in Lyons in 1584, and another French version at Anvers in the same year. Hoffmann further remarks that a work of a more popular kind, the anonymous *Das gross Planetenbuch* published at Frankfurt in 1553 (there was an earlier edition, published at Strasbourg in 1546), also omits all mention of cartomancy; Hoffmann refers to an expanded version, *Das gross Planetenbuch sampt der Geomancie, Physiognomie und Chiromantie*, issued at Erfurt in 1669, which I have not seen (the original edition dealt with 'physiognomy' and chiromancy), and there was a Dutch translation, *Het groote Planeet-Boeck*, published in Amsterdam in 1684. Merlin adds that Pierre Richelet's *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, new enlarged edition, Amsterdam, 1732, fails to list *cartomancie*, although *astrologie*, *chiromancie*, *géomancie* and *nécromancie* are all defined.

[10] See the quotation from James Cleland's '**Ηρω-Παιδεια**, *or the Institution of a Young Nobleman* (Oxford, 1607) given in the Preface, p. xxiv.

As already stated, the earliest reference to Tarot cards other than ones merely recording occasions of their being purchased or painted is in the sermon quoted by Robert Steele.[11] The anonymous Dominican preacher inveighs with the utmost vehemence against the use of dice, of playing cards, and of triumphs; he regards them as instruments of the devil; he employs every rhetorical device he can to impress upon his hearers the wickedness of using them; the figure of the Popess particularly incenses him, as contrary to the Christian faith. And yet there is not in his sermon the slightest suggestion that the *use* to which triumph cards are put differs from that to which men put dice or regular playing cards. On the contrary, the sermon, called *sermo perutilis de ludo* (a very useful sermon on gaming), states at the outset that there are three kinds of games of chance, namely dice, cards and triumphs.[12] After discussing and naming several games of dice (including backgammon games) and of cards, the preacher turns to triumphs with the words: 'About the third type of games, namely triumphs. There is nothing related to games in this world so odious to God as the game of triumphs.'[13] He goes on to complain fiercely of the subjects depicted on the cards, and of the fact that the Emperor and the Pope, the cardinal virtues, the planets, the angels and (he claims) even God himself are made to enter into the game (*in ludum intrare*). It may be said that this is a sermon against gaming, and that therefore the preacher is naturally concerned with the use of triumph cards for play rather than for other purposes: but it is simply not conceivable that anyone so intent as this Dominican on convincing his congregation that the cards of which he was speaking were the invention of the devil would have passed over in silence their use for magical purposes if he had known of such a thing; nothing would have seemed to him clearer proof of what he was maintaining. We can conclude only that, although the composition of the Tarot pack and its use for card play were perfectly familiar to him, he had never so much as heard of any other use for it.

If the traditional name, 'The Tarocchi Players', of the painting of about 1440 in the palazzo Borromeo in Milan faithfully represents its intended subject, that painting provides testimony to the use of Tarot cards in play from the period of their original invention. In 1477 a certain Pietro Bonozzi of Bologna is recorded as a maker of *carte e triumphi da zugare*;[14] *da zugare* is, of course, equivalent to the modern phrase *da giuoco*, so that we might translate the whole expression as 'playing cards and playing triumphs', showing that triumphs were thought of as being instruments of play as much as were regular cards. In 1488 the city of Brescia made an ordinance forbidding games of chance, but specifically excepting backgammon, chess, and the game of triumphs;[15] Salo made a similar exception in 1489;[16] and a statute of Bergamo of 1491 specifically prohibited by name various dice and card games, but again added 'except triumphs, chess and backgammon', and stated, in another section, that 'the present section does not apply to those playing triumphs, backgammon and chess.'[17] In 1500 a statute of Reggio nell'Emilia exempted in almost identical words those playing backgammon, chess and 'triumphs with cards'.[18] The poet Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441-1494) designed a special Tarot pack, with non-standard suit-signs and *trionfi* subjects, with verses to be printed on the cards; Pier Antonio Viti (*c.* 1470-1500) wrote a commentary on these verses, describing a special game that could be played with Boiardo's pack, and adding that many other games could be played with the cards, including all those that are accustomed to be played with the ordinary ones, that is, with ordinary Tarot cards.[19] From all this it is apparent that in the fifteenth century the use of the Tarot pack in card play was regarded as the primary, indeed the only, purpose for which the cards were made; nowhere is any other purpose mentioned or hinted at.

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[11] R. Steele, 'A notice of the Ludus Triumphorum and some early Italian card games; with some remarks on the origin of the game of cards', *Archaeologia*, vol. LVII, 1900, pp. 185-200.

[12] '... tria sunt genera ludorum fortunae, viz.: Taxillorum, Cartularum, et Triumphorum.'

[13] 'De tertia ludorum genere, scilicet triumphorum. Non est res in hoc mundo quod pertineat ad ludum tantum Deo odibilis sicut ludus triumphorum.'

[14] See Emilio Orioli, 'Sulle carte da giuoco a Bologna nel secolo XV', *Il libro e la stampa*, anno II, n.s., 1908, pp. 109-19, particularly pp. 113, 117-19.

[15] 'Exceptis ludis tabularum et rectis ludis triumphorum et scachorum.' See W.L. Schreiber, *Die ältesten Spielkarten*,

In the sixteenth century, there are many more literary references to *tarocchi*; once more, whenever there is any indication of the use of the cards, it is always for play. In 1522, a satirical poem concerning the conclave which elected Adrian VI described the cardinals playing *tarocchi*.[20] In 1526, Francesco Berni published a poem in praise of the card game of Primiera, with a commentary in which facetious remarks are made about the game of *tarocchi*.[21] In 1534 Rabelais included *tarau* in the long list of games played by Gargantua; Book V (1564) mentioned *tarots*, with dice, cards and chessmen, as instruments of play.[22] At the time of the conclave of 1549-50 which elected Julius III, another poem was written in imitation of the earlier one, again describing the cardinals playing *tarocchi*.[23] In 1550 Flavio Alberto Lollio published a poem of nearly 300 lines, the *Invettiva contra il Giuoco del Taroco* (Invective Against the Game of Tarocco), in which he derided and abused the game, although confessing that he had earlier been a keen player;[24] nowhere in the course of this piece of ridicule is there any mention of any use of the cards for fortune-telling or for any purpose other than card play. This is again a work in which, had any such practice existed, we should have expected such a reference; for, when mockery is the objective, fortune-telling is an easier butt than any game. In 1553 the Paris printer Charles Étienne referred in his work *Paradoxes* to the *chartes Italianes, desquelles on s'esbat au ieu appelé le Tarault* (Italian cards, with which one engages in the game called Tarot).[25] In 1564, in a short Latin work devoted to gaming, Girolamo Cardano included *sequentinum Tarochi*

Strasbourg, 1937, p. 78, quoting the *Statuta Brixie*, Brescia, 1508.

[16] 'Licitum sit cuilibet personae impune ludere ad scachos, aleas seu tabulas et rectum ludum triumphorum, chartae et cartarum usque ad summam lib. 3', ibid., p. 79, quoting *Statuta criminalia communitatis ripperiae Salodii*, Portesii, 1489.

[17] 'Exceptis triumphis, scachis et tabulerio'; 'Salvo quod non comprehendantur in presenti capitulo ludentes ad triumphos, ad tabuleriam et scachos ad libr. 5'; ibid., p. 79, quoting *Statuta Bergomi*, Brescia, 1491.

[18] *Statuta magnificae communitatis Regii*, Reggio, 1582, lib. III, cap. 103, 'De poena ludentis ad ludum azari', pp. 175 verso-176 recto: 'Hoc tamen Statuto non comprehendantur ludentes ad tabulas, & scachos, & triumphos cum chartis.' See W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 79, where the 1501 edition, p. 91 verso, is cited, but the city is mistakenly identified as Reggio di Calabria.

[19] See *Le Poesi Volgari e Latine di M.M. Boiardo*, ed. Angelo Solerti, Bologna, 1894, pp. 313-38 or *Tutte le opere di Matteo Maria Boiardo*, ed. A. Zottoli, vol. 2, Milan, 1937, pp. 702-16, and M. Dummett, 'Notes on a fifteenth-century pack of cards from Italy', *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, vol. I, no. 3, February 1973, pp. 1-6.

[20] See *Pasquinate di Pietro Aretino ed Anonime per il Conclave a l'Elezione di Adriano VI*, ed. Vittorio Rossi, Palermo, 1891, no. XXXII, or Mario dell'Arco, *Pasquino e le Pasquinate*, Milan, 1957, pp. 87-8.

[21] F. Berni, *Capitolo del Gioco della Primiera col Comento di Messer Pietropaulo da San Chirico*, Venice, 1526. The commentator, generally assumed to be Berni himself, scoffs at, and exaggerates, the number of cards a player of *tarocchi* has to hold in his hand, but betrays no inkling of any other use to which such cards might be put.

[22] *Gargantua*, book I, ch. 22; *Pantagruel*, book V, ch. 23.

[23] See V. Cian, 'Gioviana', *Giornale storico della Letteratura Italiana*, vol. XVII, 1890, pp. 338-40.

[24] See S.W. Singer, *Researches into the History of Playing Cards*, London, 1816, pp. 354-6, and S.R. Kaplan, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, New York, 1978, pp. 29-30.

[25] Charles Étienne, *Paradoxes, ce sont propos contre la commune opinion*, Paris, 1553, Déclamation V, p. 49. There was an English translation by Anthony Munday, entitled *A Defence of Contraries*, published in 1593: he renders the passage as 'the Italian Cardes, whereat they have a play or pastime called *Tarault*'. Étienne was translating and adapting from an Italian original by Ortensio Landi, *Paradossi*, Lyons, 1543; but Landi (par. V) refers only to 'cards' generally, though he means Tarot cards.

as one of a number of games he had played.[26] In 1576 Pierre de Larivey Champenois composed and published a riddle to which the solution was *le ieu du Tarot* (the game of Tarot).[27] A recently published book cites a court deposition which mentions a game of Tarot, in which two noblemen took part, played in an inn in Grenoble in 1579.[28] In 1583 King Henri III of France promulgated an edict, imposing a tax of one sou on each pack of regular playing cards, and two sous on each pack of tarots. The preamble to this edict is instructive from our standpoint: it says that 'the games of cards, tarots and dice, … instead of serving for pleasure and recreation in accordance with the intention of those who invented them, at the present time serve only to do harm and give rise to public scandal, being games of chance', and goes on to speak of their providing occasion for fraud and provoking quarrels.[29] The author of this edict had no doubt about the purpose for which the Tarot pack had been invented, or the use to which it was currently put, and neither included fortune-telling. In 1585 Tomaso Garzoni, in his *La Piazza universale*, gave a description of the *tarocchi* pack in the chapter of his book dealing with gamesters, and included *tarocchi* in a list of card games.[30] In 1591, John Florio, in a teach-yourself-Italian book called *Second Frutes*, with English and Italian conversation on facing pages, gave the sentence '… io soglio talvolta giuocar' alla palla, a scacchi, al tavogliere, alle carte, a tarocchi, a dadi …', with the translation '… sometimes I play at tennis, at chess, at tables, at cardes, at teristriall triumphs, at dice, …';[31] 'teristriall triumphs' is Florio's usual clumsy way of translating *tarocchi*, as may be seen from his Italian/English dictionary, *A Worlde of Wordes*, 1598 and 1611 (s.v. 'tarocchi'). In 1592 a similar teach-yourself-French book, *The French Alphabeth* by G. Delamothe, likewise included the sentences 'A quel ieu voulez vous iouer? voulez vous iouer aux Dames, aux Dez, aux Tarots, aux Eschets, &c.', translated as 'What game will you play at? Will you play at tables, at Dyce, at Tarots, at Chesses, &c.'.[32] In all these passages we find the Tarot pack associated exclusively with a particular kind of card game; in none is it connected with any other activity. It would be tedious to continue this list of citations beyond 1600; I will content myself with remarking that, in the 1659 edition of the *Maison des jeux*, the second of a long series of books describing card games and other games that were to be published in France, there is an entry on *Tarot*, describing various forms of the game played with the Tarot pack, and making no mention of cartomancy. In fact, although I have made a sustained search, I have been unable to find any mention of cartomancy with the Tarot pack, or any association of it with an occult or esoteric significance, from before 1781: nor does the neo-occultist literature on the Tarot yield any such references.

It is apparent that the Tarot pack was not invented for use in fortune-telling, but as an instrument of play, and was used only for the latter purpose throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; it was only after the practice of fortune-telling with the regular pack had become well established in the eighteenth century that anybody thought of using the Tarot pack for the same purpose. Even then, it was confined to France for an entire century: it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that Tarot cartomancy, or the occultist interpretation of the pack, spread to other countries. But, of course, once the idea has been implanted that the Tarot pack is, and was from the first intended as, an instrument of magic or that it is imbued with an occult meaning, it appears extremely plausible to anyone who does not know the actual history of the pack. Many Tarot packs are now designed specifically for use in fortune-telling, and the cards are decorated with Hebrew letters or Egyptian hieroglyphs or other elements which have no genuine historical association with the Tarot pack at all, save that introduced by the occultists. But suppose that we look at the type of Tarot pack that was standard in France during the eighteenth century, one exemplifying the celebrated pattern known as the Tarot de Marseille: it may still be difficult for us to see it for what it was, just a pack of cards intended for a game; it may well strike us as sinister or mysterious, as something that must have been intended to be vested with an esoteric import. This impression is not wholly due to the effect of occultist propaganda; it is also a response to the designs themselves. There is no reason to suppose that the French cardmakers of the eighteenth century had the least notion that their Tarot cards might be used for anything but play. It is probably true, however, that, by that date in France, the Tarot pack had come, even to those who produced it and those who used it, to appear quaint, with its no longer generally familiar Italian suit-signs and the bizarre figures on the triumph cards; and the cardmakers deliberately adopted designs which accentuated this quaintness. If we want to understand how the Tarot pack appeared to those among whom it arose, we must look, not at these eighteenth-century cards, but at the hand-painted packs of the fifteenth century; and, when we do, the impression of quaintness and of the sinister vanishes. The symbolism may not always be transparent to us, but it does not seem to have been intended to be opaque; the air is clear and unclouded by the smoke of the sorcerer's incantations.

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[26] Girolamo Cardano, *Liber de Ludo Aleae*, in *Hieronymi Cardani Mediolanensis Opera Omnia*, tom. 1, Lyons, 1663, pp. 262-76. For further details, see Chapter 18.

[27] Champenois continued, in 1576, the translation made by Jean Louveau in 1560 of a book of riddles by Giovanni Francesco Straparola, published in France as *Les facétieuses nuits*; however, some of Champenois's material is not in the original, and this includes Night XIII, Tale 7, the enigma of which the solution is *le ieu de Tarot*.

[28] E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Le Carnaval de Romans*, Paris, 1979, p. 91. At about 9 p.m. on 4 April 1579, at the hôtellerie du Cerf in Grenoble, a surgeon was talking to a group of five noblemen. One of them, Caulis, said to him, 'Be quiet: you are preventing them from playing' (*Taisez-vous. Vous les empêchez de jouer*), for, the deposition explains, two others, de Doville and de Triots, were playing Tarot (*parce que les dits sieurs de Doville et de Triots jouaient aux Tarots*). I owe this reference to Mr Robin Briggs. See also fn. 6, chap. 9.

[29] 'Les jeux de cartes, tarot, dèz … au lieu de servir au plaisir et récréation selon l'intention de ceux qui les ont inventés, ne servent à présent que de dommages et font scandale public, étant jeux de hasard'; cited from H.-R. D'Allemagne, *Les Cartes à Jouer*, vol. I, Paris, 1906, p. 293.

[30] T. Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale*, Venice, 1585; in the 1586 edition, the passage is on p. 574.

[31] John Florio, *Second Frutes*, London, 1591, pp. 66-7.

[32] G. Delamothe, *The French Alphabeth*, London, 1592, pp. 150-1.

CHAPTER 6

The Occult

(i) *The first phase in France*

The process by which the Tarot pack acquired its cartomantic and occult associations can be precisely traced. The entire occultist Tarot tradition stems from the work of Antoine Court de Gébelin (1719-1784), a Protestant pastor, Freemason and savant.[1] Born in Geneva, he was the son of Antoine Court, the most prominent French Protestant pastor of his day, and lived in Switzerland until he was over 40; the suffix 'de Gébelin' which he appended to his family name was simply a pseudonym of the kind frequently adopted by French Protestants at that time. Two years after his father's death in 1760, he involved himself in the celebrated affair of Jean Calas, the Protestant merchant who was executed in Toulouse in 1762 for the alleged murder of his son, a convert to Catholicism, Voltaire being the most famous of those who denounced the execution. After visiting many of the Protestant communities in the south and west of France, de Gébelin then established himself in Paris. Influential friends among the pastors tried to get him appointed as an official representative of all the Protestant churches; these schemes never worked out, but de Gébelin seems to have acted quite effectively as an unofficial protector of French Protestants. He was assiduous in cultivating good relations with influential courtiers and officials, through whom he intervened on behalf of persecuted individuals or churches.

During the 1770s Court de Gébelin became active in Masonic circles, and became a member of the Lodge of the Neuf Soeurs.[2] He also became a leading member of the order of the Philalèthes, an offshoot, dating from the mid-1770s, of the illuminist Order of Elect Cohens founded by Martines de Pasqually (died 1774); the Philalèthes combined almost every kind of theosophical and occultist doctrine – Martinist, Swedenborgian, alchemical and Masonic.[3] Between 1773 and 1782, Court de Gébelin published by private subscription, the first nine volumes of a huge work entitled *Le Monde primitif*: though several more volumes were projected, he did not live to complete this monument to misdirected scholarship. The modest celebrity that he acquired from the publication of the successive volumes of his *magnum opus* served to expand his social circle, and thereby assisted his work on behalf of the Protestants; he was clearly *persona grata* with at least some members of the government, and, towards the end of his life, was actually appointed one of the royal censors, an extraordinary position for a Protestant to hold. He established a 'Museum', a meeting-place for a sort of literary society, which gathered for poetry readings and for papers on literary and also scientific subjects, such as one by the Mesmerist Jean-Louis Carra apparently on light-waves and sound-waves ('lucific and sonific vibrations').[4] At the close of his life, de Gébelin became a fervent supporter of the theory of animal magnetism advocated by Franz Anton Mesmer and his followers; in 1784 he addressed a letter in defence of it to the subscribers to *Le Monde primitif*, reporting that he had himself been cured by Mesmer's treatment and claiming that Mesmerism gave the clue to the character of primitive science; he also joined Mesmer's Society of Universal Harmony.[5] It may, indeed, have been this last enthusiasm which cost him his life, for his illness returned, and he went again to Mesmer for treatment; on 12 May 1784, he fell down dead next to a mesmeric tub.[6] This prompted a satirical epitaph:

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[1] A good account of his career is to be found in Paul Schmidt, *Court de Gébelin à Paris (1763-1784)*, St-Blaise and Roubaix, n.d. [1908]. The date of his birth is usually given as 1725, but Schmidt establishes conclusively that he was born in February 1719, his father having later misrepresented the date of his birth to disguise his extremely slow development. I have had much extremely useful help and advice concerning de Gébelin's life from Mr Robin Briggs, of All Souls College, Oxford.

[2] See P. Schmidt, op. cit., pp. 151-2, and Auguste Viatte, *Les Sources occultes du romantisme, 1770-1820*, vol. 1, Paris, 1928, p. 186.

[3] See A. Viatte, op. cit., pp. 150-2. Viatte, p. 65, gives 1778 as the year of origin of the Ordre des Philalèthes; Christopher McIntosh, *Éliphas Lévi and the French Occult Revival*, London, 1972, p. 30, gives 1775.

> Ci-gît ce pauvre Gébelin,
> Qui parloit Grec, Hébreu, Latin;
> Admirez tous son héroisme:
> Il fut martyr du magnétisme.

(Here lies poor Gébelin, Who spoke Greek, Hebrew and Latin; Admire his heroism, everyone: He was a martyr to magnetism.)

Court de Gébelin believed that there had been a golden age, a 'primitive world' in which all men had shared a common language, common customs, a common culture and a common religion: 'all the nations, at the moment when they each arrived in their countries,' he informs us, 'had exactly the same customs and practices';[7] and again, 'there exists an eternal and immutable order, which unites heaven and earth, the body and the soul, the physical and the moral life, men, societies, empires, the generations that pass, those that arrive, which make themselves (*sic*) known by a single speech, by a single language, by a single form of government, by a single religion, by a single worship.'[8] Such a belief has a certain affinity with the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, an affinity which was not lost upon contemporaries: in 1785 there was even published a comparative study of the two writers, the abbé Le Gros's *Analyse des ouvrages de J.-J. Rousseau, de Genève, et de M. Court de Gébelin, auteur du Monde primitif*. De Gébelin also believed that, by various means, he could reconstruct the unified civilisation of the 'primitive world', subsequently disintegrated. One of these means was the allegorical interpretation of myths; for instance, the labours of Hercules represented the different agricultural tasks carried out during the twelve months of the year, and thus, properly construed, afforded an insight into primitive agriculture.[9] Another means was the etymological study of known languages, from which he claimed to be able to reconstruct the single primitive language from which they all derived, together with the primitive alphabet of sixteen letters; by far the greater part of the nine volumes of *Le Monde primitif* actually published is devoted to these linguistic investigations. Given de Gébelin's initial assumption, these ideas are not, in themselves, absurd: it is not unreasonable to suppose that myths may offer clues to the societies that engendered them; and in view of the subsequent success of philologists in reconstructing Proto-Indo-European, the etymological part of the project cannot be dismissed out of hand either. But, as might have been expected from someone whose head was as full as de Gébelin's with the various occultist and illuminist doctrines in vogue in late eighteenth-century France, his procedure was almost wholly unscientific: his conclusions rest on mere intuition or on wild guesses not deserving even to be called 'intuition', as when he asserts that the name 'Paris' originally meant 'ship of Isis', that Isis was worshipped by the Druids and that a temple of hers stood on the site of Notre-Dame.[10] In the history of ideas, de Gébelin's monumental but unfinished work has a minor importance as having helped to reinforce the conception of a happy natural primitive society; but, scientifically considered, de Gébelin's disdain for serious evidence and for any process of rational demonstration rendered the product of his ten years' labour worthless.

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[4] See Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France*, Cambridge, Mass., 1968, pp. 24, 99 and especially Appendix 2, pp. 178-9. In his main text, p. 99, Darnton unfairly ridicules Carra by mistranscribing 'sonific' as 'conific'.

[5] See R. Darnton, op. cit., pp. 116-17.

[6] See R. Darnton, op. cit., p. 117, and the comte de Résie, *Histoire et Traité des Sciences Occultes*, vol. 2, Paris, 1857, p. 183.

[7] A. Court de Gébelin, *Le Monde primitif*, vol. II, Paris, 1774, 'Plan général et raisonné', p. 83.

[8] Ibid., vol. VIII, Paris, 1781, p. xix.

[9] Ibid., vol. II, 'Allégories Orientales', pp. 147-258.

[10] Ibid., vol. II, 'Du génie allégorique et Symbolique des Anciens', p. 165, and 'Plan Général et Raisonné', pp. 60-1.

Among the more absurd applications of his method of intuitive insight into origins is a section in his eighth volume, published in 1781, on the Tarot pack.[11] All the rest of his bizarre speculations have long been forgotten: but this one essay became the fountainhead of the whole occult Tarot mystique.

At the time when de Gébelin was writing, the Tarot pack, and the game played with it, had been known in France for two and a half centuries; but card-playing traditions in France were highly localised, and the game was at that time quite unknown in Paris.[12] De Gébelin describes how, some years previously, he called on a Swiss lady ('Madame la C. d'H.') and found her playing a game of Tarot with some friends. Looking at the cards, which he had never seen before, he was seized by one of his inspirations: spreading the triumph cards out on the table – presumably preventing the unfortunate ladies from continuing their game – he identified them, as he thought, as bearing symbols of the ancient Egyptian religion. Naturally, with such a clue, he could draw no other conclusion than that the pack had been invented by ancient Egyptian priests, and that it contained a symbolic representation of their doctrine. It was, in fact, a book of seventy-eight pages (*feuillets*), one that, by its disguise as a pack of playing cards, had escaped the flames that had destroyed their libraries. At that time, of course, Egyptian hieroglyphics had not yet been deciphered by Champollion; but, to a man of de Gébelin's intuitive gifts, that was no great obstacle, and he is able to inform us that the word 'Tarot' means 'the royal road', being derived from ancient Egyptian 'tar', meaning 'way', and 'ro', 'ros' or 'rog', meaning 'royal'; neither word is in fact to be found in Wallis Budge's Egyptian dictionary.

De Gébelin was far from claiming the existence of any continuous tradition of esoteric interpretation of the Tarot cards. On the contrary, he supposed that the Egyptian priests who had incorporated their teaching symbolically in a playing-card pack had had the ingenuity to disguise it in such a way in order to ensure its preservation through the ages; in his view, card players had for generations innocently taken the pack as the mere instrument of a game, oblivious to the deeper meaning which his own genius had enabled him, for the first time for centuries, to penetrate. His reconstruction of the history of the Tarot pack – again effected by unaided intuition – is that it was first brought by the ancient Egyptians who invented it to Imperial Rome; remaining in Rome for many centuries, it had travelled with the Popes to Avignon; from Avignon it had spread throughout Provence; and from there it had also been transmitted to Germany.

Of the triumph cards, he calls II (the Popess) 'the High Priestess', V (the Pope) 'the Chief Hierophant' or 'High Priest', VI (Love) 'Marriage', VII (the Chariot) 'Osiris Triumphant', IX (the Hermit) 'the Wise Man' and XVI (the Tower or Maison Dieu) 'the Castle of Plutus'. Of XII (the Hanged Man), he says that it should be called 'Prudence': he appears to have seen a Tarot pack in which the figure, suspended by one leg, was printed upside down, so as to appear to be upright and dancing; the inversion of this figure was in fact a mistake invariably made by the eighteenth-century Belgian cardmakers in their rather special version of the Italian-suited Tarot pack. XV (the Devil) de Gébelin names 'Typhon', a character of Greek mythology identified with the Egyptian god Set, enemy of Osiris. XVII (the Star) he names 'Sirius' or 'the Dog-Star', and claims that the female figure shown on this card in the Tarot de Marseille is Isis. He thinks that the cardmakers have misinterpreted both the highest cards: XXI is miscalled the World, and really represents Time; the symbols of the four Evangelists represent the four seasons – such an obviously Christian symbol has to be explained away. Likewise, XX ought not to represent the Last Judgment, but, rather, the Creation. The sequence should be interpreted by taking the cards in descending numerical order: the

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[11] Ibid., vol VIII, pp. 365-94.

[12] The editor of the 1726 edition of *Les facétieuses nuits*, by Giovanni Francesco Straparola, translated by Jean Louveau, referred to in footnote 24 to Chapter 5, glossed the answer '*le ieu du Tarot*' to the riddle in Night XIII, tale 7, by '*sorte de jeu de cartes aujourd'hui hors d'usage*' ('kind of card game now obsolete'). This was at just the period when large numbers of Tarot packs were being produced by the cardmakers of Marseilles, and the game was enjoying great popularity in the south and east of France, in Switzerland and, above all, in Germany. De Gébelin himself refers to the fact that the game was not known in Paris, although popular elsewhere.

Egyptians always counted in that way, he assures us, without explaining how they knew where to begin. He adds, in passing, that the twenty-two triumphs correspond to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet; he does not trouble to explain what that alphabet had to do with the ancient Egyptians. He goes on to give a detailed 'geographico-politico-moral' exegesis of the pack as a whole; this is quite unimpressive, and need not detain us.

De Gébelin appended to his own essay one by another author, whom he describes as an *Officier Général* and *Gouverneur de Province*, and whose name is coyly given only as M(onsieur) le C(omte) de M.***.[13] The Comte de M.***'s essay was to contribute more to the subsequent mythology of the Tarot pack than de Gébelin's own. He agrees with de Gébelin on the ancient Egyptian origin of the pack, and on its comprising a book: he calls it the 'book of Thoth' (*livre de Thot*), giving an etymology of 'Tarot' different from de Gébelin's. For him, the word is derived from Egyptian 't a Rosh': 't' is the article, 'a' means 'doctrine' or 'science', and 'Rosh' is a name of the god Thoth (again, these fragments of ancient Egyptian are spurious and uncorroborated by Wallis Budge). His theory of the dissemination of the pack is also different: according to him, it entered Europe via Spain with the Muslims, and was carried to Germany by the troops of Charlemagne. He agrees with de Gébelin in thinking that the triumph cards should be ranked in descending order, beginning with the XXI, and in associating XX with the Creation, specifically, the Creation of Man; he gives an interpretation under which they narrate the history of the world, beginning with the Creation, its various stages being depicted on cards XXI to XVII, and divided into the Golden, Silver, and Iron Ages. He accepted the Hanged Man (XII) as correctly depicted, not as an inverted representation of Prudence, and takes VII to show the Chariot of War and VI (Love) to show man choosing between vice and virtue; V and II he takes to represent Jupiter and Juno, as they indeed did in the Tarot de Besançon pattern, widely used in Germany and Switzerland; and he describes the Bateleur (I) as holding a magician's wand. The suit-signs of Coins, he says, represent talismans, the household gods of Laban.

De M.***'s distinctive contribution, however, is to have introduced the association of the Tarot cards with fortune-telling: without even pretending to offer the merest shred of evidence, he ascribes this practice to the ancient Egyptians, and describes in detail a method of divination with the cards, which purports to be a reconstruction of the method used in ancient Egypt. Following de Gébelin's hint, he associates the letters of the Hebrew alphabet with the triumph cards, Aleph with XXI, Beth with XX down to Shin with I and Tau with the Fool; this association plays a role in his cartomantic method.[14] De Gébelin, in introducing de M.***'s essay, says that he has rediscovered the Egyptian principles of divination with the cards, principles which, de Gébelin says, were known by the earliest bands of Egyptians, misnamed Bohemians, who carried the cards with them throughout Europe. This is the first appearance of the theory associating the Gypsies with the Tarot pack: the Gypsies did not, of course, originate from Egypt; but, when they arrived in Europe, they had given themselves out to be a group of persecuted Egyptian Christians, and they were generally accepted as such until their Indian origin was established by a philological study of their language. It does not appear to bother de Gébelin in the least that this new theory, about the Gypsies, is quite inconsistent with the account of the dissemination of the Tarot pack he has given in his own essay.

These absurd conjectures would doubtless have been as quickly forgotten as the rest of the rigmarole contained in de Gébelin's nine ponderous volumes had it not been for a professional fortune-teller calling himself 'Etteilla'. Etteilla was in business in Paris from at least 1770 until his death on 12 December 1791, offering his services not only to read the cards, but also to cast horoscopes, make talismans, interpret dreams and give instruction in practical magic. It is difficult to be sure of anything about his life before 1770. A brief biography of him, by J.-B. Millet-Saint-Pierre, was published in 1859 at Le Havre under the title *Recherches sur le dernier sorcier et la dernière école de la magie*: but this was based only on Etteilla's publications from 1770 onwards, together with some correspondence and other documents from the late years.[15] It is known, from the obituary written by his disciple Hugand and from one of his own pamphlets, that his true surname was Alliette, the mystical-sounding 'Etteilla' having been formed simply by reversing it; his given name is quite unknown. Éliphas Lévi referred to him as a hairdresser (*perruquier*), and in this he was followed by many writers, particularly of the occultist persuasion; Papus even demoted him to an apprentice hairdresser (*garçon coiffeur*). This seems, however, to be due to a desire to belittle him, and to be based on no more than the fact that in 1790 he lived on the third floor of the house of a *perruquier*; when he died, in the next year, he was living on the first floor of a plasterer's house, but no one has suggested that he was a plasterer. He described himself as a teacher of algebra; but it is unclear whether he ever actually practised that profession. In a work of 1782, he speaks of himself as having practised cartomancy for thirty years;[16] in a later work, he mentions a book by himself, called *Abrégé de la cartonomancie* (*sic* – Etteilla was always an imaginative user of the French language), published in 1753.[17] His biographer had not seen this book, however, and there is no copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the British Library or the Bodleian; and in yet another work, Etteilla referred to his first publication as having been in 1757.[18] In a book of 1785, he stated that he was forty-seven, and had begun his career as a magician at the age of fourteen.[19] Much of what he tells us about his earlier life appears to be invention or fantasy, however, and it is safest to say that we know nothing about it.

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[13] *Le Monde primitif*, vol. VIII, Paris, 1781, pp. 395-410. Cf. also p. 366. Mr Robin Briggs has succeeded in identifying this gentleman, on the assumption that, in designating his collaborator 'M. le C. de M.***', Court de Gébelin was giving his correct initial, and was correct in describing him as an *officier général* and *gouverneur de province*. On this assumption, Mr Briggs informs me that scrutiny of the *État militaire de la France* for 1778 reveals only one plausible candidate, Louis-Raphael-Lucrèce de Fayolle, comte de Mellet, a brigadier in the cavalry and governor of the Maine and the Perche from 1767-84. De Mellet appears to have been a quite unremarkable court noble, not even known to have been a Freemason; but he did figure in the second list of subscribers to *Le Monde primitif*.

[14] See footnote 135.

Fortune-telling, particularly by means of playing cards, began to achieve a vogue in Paris during the period preceding the Revolution, a vogue greatly intensified during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era. Whether he had been practising it for nearly twenty years or had only recently taken it up, Etteilla seems by 1770 to have acquired something of a reputation. He claimed to have been the first to have practised cartomancy by laying out a number of cards, and interpreting the resulting combination, rather than by drawing a single card at a time. When we consider the crudity of the method involved in using Lenthall's fortune-telling pack, this claim appears quite plausible; but, if it is correct, the new method must have spread very rapidly, since in 1765 Casanova had a mistress in Russia, a peasant girl named Zaïre, who was accustomed to consult the cards by laying them out in five rows of five cards each.[20] Etteilla published in 1770 a work entitled *Etteilla ou la seule manière de tirer les cartes*, with a new edition in 1773; a much revised edition, under the title *Etteilla ou instruction sur l'art de tirer les cartes*, came out in 1782, and numerous editions thereafter, under the title *La Cartonomancie française*. Etteilla's method involved the use of a 32-card Piquet pack, to which a single blank card had been added, called the Etteilla; he originally recommended that this card be made by borrowing an Ace from another pack. The function of the Etteilla was to represent the person whose fortune was to be told; to every other card, two symbolic meanings were assigned, according as the card happened to be placed in the lay-out the right way up or upside down. Later, Etteilla had 33-card packs made with an inscription at top and bottom of each card to give its significance when upright or reversed, and offered them for sale. In addition to his books on cartomancy, he also wrote on astrology, his *Le Zodiaque mystérieux* being published in 1772.

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[15] Some of Millet-Saint-Pierre's conclusions are based on too hasty a reading of his sources. Thus he says that Etteilla called his wife a Xanthippe; but the passage to which he refers, p. 35 of the fourth *cahier* of the *Manière de se récréer*, is only discussing an example of an interpretation of a layout of cards to tell the fortune of someone 'whom we shall call Etteilla'; the cards predict that 'Etteilla will ally himself with a Xanthippe', but this unfortunate individual is the client, not the cartomancer!

[16] *Etteilla ou Instruction sur l'art de tirer les cartes*, 3rd edition, 1782, 'Soliloques'.

[17] *Philosophie des hautes sciences*, 1785, p. 116.

[18] *Les sept nuances*, not dated (probably 1786), p. 40.

[19] *Fragment sur les hautes sciences*, 1785, p. 147: 'depuis l'âge de quatorze ans que je suis la Magie (j'en ai quarante-sept).' I suppose that this obscure phrase might mean that he had been practising magic for forty-seven years, since the age of fourteen, in which case he would have been sixty-one at the time.

[20] Jacques Casanova de Seingalt, *Histoire de ma vie*, édition intégrale, Paris, 1960-2, six *tomes* of two *volumes* each, tome 5, vol. X, ch. 6, p. 121. Casanova purchased the girl, who was only 13 at the time, from her parents; he gave her the name Zaïre after the central character in a play of that name by Voltaire. I owe this reference to D. Hoffmann and E. Kroppenstedt, *Wahrsagekarten*, Bielefeld, 1972, pp. 10-11.

What appears to have raised Etteilla to the rank of a genuine, if slightly ludicrous, celebrity, though not to have gained him a fortune, was his invention in 1783 of a method of cartomancy with the Tarot pack, which, following the Comte de M.***, he almost always referred to as the '*livre de Thot*'. Between 1783 and 1785 he produced an extended work on the subject entitled *Manière de se récréer avec le jeu de cartes nommées Tarots.* Originally, this consisted of four *cahiers*, presumably issued in 1783;[21] by 1785 a supplement, counting as an additional *cahier*, had been added to each of the first four *cahiers*, and between the third *cahier* and its supplement there was inserted a *Fragment sur les hautes sciences*, thus making nine *cahiers* in four volumes; finally, a fifth volume was issued to precede all the rest, with the resounding title of *Philosophie des hautes sciences ou clef donnée aux enfans de l'art, de la science et de la sagesse.* Etteilla complained that the title *Manière de se récréer* ... had been imposed on him by the royal censors; he objected to the implication that cartomancy was a mere recreation, and wanted to call the work *La Cartonomancie égyptienne*, to contrast with *La Cartonomancie française*, the title under which the later editions of his work on fortune-telling with the regular pack appeared.

The *Manière de se récréer* is as disordered as the sequence in which its ten *cahiers* appeared; it is turgid, rambling and wordy; it often repeats and occasionally contradicts itself, and yet contrives to leave essential points unstated. It is evident that Etteilla's invention of Tarot cartomancy had been inspired by the publication in 1781 of de Gébelin's eighth volume; but, although Etteilla refers to de Gébelin in terms of great respect, while disagreeing with him on many points, he labours to convince his readers that he had long been independently aware of the esoteric significance of the Tarot pack. He repeatedly asserts that he was engaged in studying the Tarot pack from 1757 to 1765; he informs us that he had been prompted to undertake this study by an aged Piedmontese whom he had met in Lamballe in 1757, and who gave him his notes on the Tarot pack, which he, the old man, called an 'Egyptian book'; he reports that he wrote a dissertation on the meaning of triumph no. II, the Popess, for which there were conferred on him in Frankfurt am Main in 1777 the titles of *Astro-phil-astres* and Magus of France (the former of these titles he several times employed in his later writings). It is impossible to take these claims seriously. Though Etteilla explained that his system of cartomancy with the regular pack had been adapted from the interpretation of the 'book of Thot' to which his prolonged studies had led him, his earlier cartomantic writings in fact betray no hint that he was so much as aware of the existence of the Tarot pack; only in editions of his *Etteilla* from 1782 on is the word *françaises* added to the phrase *l'art de tirer les cartes* in the title. Moreover, his interpretation of the Tarot cards borrows heavily from de Gébelin and his collaborator the Comte de M.***. Like them, he regarded the pack as of Egyptian origin; like them, he saw it, not as intended for use in play, but as comprising a book, written in symbols which he calls hieroglyphs, embodying an ancient wisdom, including a universal medicine and an account of the creation of the world and the history of mankind. His eagerness to establish his claim to priority over de Gébelin could be explained as due to the chagrin of a man who finds he has been scooped, but it hardly accounts for his having waited for eighteen years to give his discovery to the world. When he did so, however, he was able to disclose more detail about the composition of the book of Thoth than de Gébelin had done: it was devised by a committee of seventeen magi, presided over by Hermes Trismegistus, in the 171st year after the Flood, being 3,953 years before the date (1783) at which Etteilla recorded the fact, and the first copy was inscribed on leaves of gold, which were disposed about a fire temple at Memphis; he is even able to supply an exact plan of their disposition within the temple. He makes no pretence at any explanation of how he has come by the remarkable knowledge which he is imparting.

Etteilla confidently asserted that the Tarot pack, as it then existed, had been distorted from its original Egyptian form by the mistakes of the cardmakers. In the first place, several of the designs, or 'hieroglyphs', on the triumph cards are, he says, wrong on points of detail; for instance, in place of the oval wreath on the World card there should be a serpent biting its tail and forming a circle. Five of the 'hieroglyphs' used by the 'vile cardmakers' are completely incorrect. One of these is the Hanged Man, which should be replaced by Prudence; in this, he is following de Gébelin. The other four 'false hieroglyphs', according to Etteilla, are the Pope, Popess, Emperor and Empress. Instead of the Pope, the corresponding card in the original Egyptian version showed light dispelling chaos; instead of the Popess, the original card showed a superb garden, with a naked man standing in it, surrounded by eleven circles in the air. He nowhere clearly states what images should likewise replace the Emperor and Empress. Secondly, the cardmakers have confused the order of the cards. Etteilla takes quite literally the idea that the cards, which, again following de Gébelin, he calls *feuillets*, form the pages of a book: hence every single card should be numbered, as the pages of a book are numbered, and not just the twenty-one triumphs. Moreover, it is proper to use Arabic numerals, rather than the Roman ones employed by the card-makers, since, according to Etteilla, it was the Egyptians who invented the zero and from whom the Arabs derived their numerals, although he inconsistently illustrates single symbols used by the Egyptians for the numbers from 1 to 12 – symbols which are just as imaginary as all the other information he provides. The cards numbered from 1 to 21 are the twenty-one triumphs; but the cardmakers have got their order completely wrong. Etteilla provides a table to show the numbers of cards in the Tarot de Marseille which correspond to the numbers in the original Egyptian order. This is as follows, with the Arabic numerals representing Etteilla's order and the Roman ones that of the Tarot de Marseille; I have added the names of the traditional subjects.

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[21] In all the editions I have seen, the first and third *cahiers* are dated 1783, the second and fourth 1785: but, since it seems unlikely that even Etteilla would have brought them out in such a perverse order, I conjecture that the first four *cahiers* all originally appeared in 1783. However, anything is possible, including that none of them was actually published until 1785.

1 – V (the Pope)
2 – XIX (the Sun)
3 – XVIII (the Moon)
4 – XVII (the Star)
5 – XXI (the World)
6 – III (the Empress)
7 – IV (the Emperor)
8 – II (the Popess)
9 – VIII (Justice)
10 – XIV (Temperance)
11 – XI (Fortitude)
12 – XII (the Hanged Man)
13 – VI (Love or the Lovers)
14 – XV (the Devil)
15 – I (the *Bateleur* or Mountebank)
16 – XX (the Judgment)
17 – XIII (Death)
18 – IX (the Hermit)
19 – XVI (the *Maison Dieu* or Tower struck by lightning)
20 – X (the Wheel of Fortune)
21 – VII (the Chariot)

Apart from card 12 – Prudence – Etteilla does not give names to the cards, but invariably refers to them by number; but some of the cards should bear other numerals in addition to those which represent their position in the sequence. Thus cards 2, 3, 4 and 5 should also bear, respectively, the numerals 2, 1, 3 and 4, to indicate that they severally represent the 2nd, 1st, 3rd and 4th elements, namely fire, water, air and earth. Cards 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 should also bear, respectively, the numerals 14, 15, 16, 17 and 13: these represent a sort of alternative pagination, because, although he had displaced the card symbolising Death from the thirteenth place, he thought that the assignment of the number 13 to it had a secondary appropriateness. Cards 1 to 7 represent the creation of the world (an adaptation of an idea of de M.***), while card 8 represents the rest after creation. In the second *cahier*, he explains the first seven cards in sequence as depicting the creation of the world in a manner which appears to correspond to the account of this given in the *Pimander*, the first of the Hermetic books (books supposedly written by Hermes Trismegistus in remote antiquity), to which he refers repeatedly. But in the same *cahier*, he also associates cards 2 to 7 with the six Biblical days of creation, which involves disturbing their order; and in later *cahiers* he states that cards 2, 4, 3, 6, 7 and 5, in that order, should also bear the numerals from 1 to 6 to indicate the days of creation which they represent; card 8 is not to bear an extra numeral. The final upshot of all this is, therefore, that cards 2 to 7 will bear, respectively, the numerals 2.2.1, 3.1.3, 4.3.2, 5.4.6, 6.-.4 and 7.-.5. This kind of confusion is typical of Etteilla; together with the high-flown language, the digressions, the repetitions and the endless numerological computations, they make his writings inexpressibly tedious to read, and would do so even if they contained anything but obvious nonsense. In addition, cards 1 to 12 are associated with the signs of the Zodiac, and should bear the corresponding astrological symbols; he fails to notice that, for some obscure reason, the cardmakers seem already to have incorporated such an association into the Tarot de Marseille designs for triumphs XVII, XVIII and XIX, and he does not assign the same constellations to these cards. Astrology plays a large part in the *Manière de se récréer*, as in others of Etteilla's works.

The numbers of the suit cards run from 22 to 77, starting with the Batons, followed by the Cups, then the Swords and finally the Coins; the Coins are in fact, Etteilla tells us, again following de M.***, the 'little gods of Egypt', talismans from which all monetary coins were originally derived. Within each suit, the cards run in the order King, Queen, Cavalier, Jack, 10, 9 and so on down to Ace, the King bearing the lowest number, e.g. 22 in Batons, and the Ace the highest, 35 in Batons. The Ace to 10 of Coins – cards 77 to 68 – are associated with the Sun, Mercury, Venus, the Moon, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the head of the Dragon, the tail of the Dragon and the *partie de Fortune* respectively, and should bear the corresponding astrological symbols; I am afraid my astrology is too weak to enable me to say what the *partie de Fortune* is. The Fool, however, bears the number 0, and does not really have a number at all; it comes between cards 21 and 22, that is, after the triumph cards and before the suit cards.

Each suit card is given two different abstract meanings, one for when it is placed upright and one for when it is reversed, just as in Etteilla's method of fortune-telling with the regular pack; in fact, the significations of the cards in the Piquet pack are, with some slight variations, transferred to the corresponding cards in the Tarot pack, with Batons taken as equivalent to Diamonds, Cups to Hearts, Swords to Spades and Coins to Clubs. Cards 1 to 21 and 0 – the triumph cards and the Fool – have each only one abstract meaning, on the other hand; the effect of the reversal of such a card is to weaken, but not to alter, its significance. The role of the Etteilla card in his original system, namely to represent the person whose fortune is to be told, is now taken by either card 1 or card 8, according as that person is a man or a woman; Etteilla does not hesitate to attribute the practice of using these cards for that purpose to the ancient Egyptian cartomancers. It would be pointless to describe his various methods of laying out the cards, or the many other complications of his system.

From 1785 until 1791, a stream of books and pamphlets poured from Etteilla's pen, on numerology, alchemy, chiromancy, astrology and even on social and political questions, but, above all, on Tarot cartomancy. His principal other works devoted primarily to the Tarot pack are: *Science: Leçons théoriques et pratiques du Livre de Thot* (1787), of which only the first lesson seems to have appeared; *Cours théorique et pratique du Livre de Thot*, an unfinished work of 1790; *Jeu du Tharoth ou jeu royale de la vie humaine* (1790), describing a game with the Tarot pack invented by Etteilla and involving divination; and *Code pratique de la cartonomancie égyptienne* (not dated). The *Jeu des Tarots ou le Livre de Thot, ouvert à la manière des Egyptiens*, purportedly published in Memphis, was no more than a prospectus for his professional services, probably issued in 1788. But the 'book of Thot' makes its appearance in almost all his works; it is brought into everything – how to interpret dreams, how to pick a winning number in the national lottery.

From 1783 on, Etteilla advertised for sale a 'corrected' Tarot pack; this was to be the first of a long line of specially designed cartomantic Tarot packs. Each of the first four *cahiers* of the *Manière de se récréer* has as a frontispiece one of the cards 9 to 12, representing the four cardinal virtues, and these presumably illustrate the designs of these cards in his 'corrected' pack. Although no specimen of this pack seems to have survived, we can gain a very exact idea of most of the cards in it from his descriptions of the original Egyptian designs. In 1788, Etteilla formed a Société littéraire des associés libres des interprètes du livre de Thot, that is, a society for Tarot cartomancy. This included a Prussian by the name of Hisler, who receives many favourable mentions in Etteilla's writings, and who departed to practise fortune-telling by various means in Berlin, and another called Hugand. Hugand adopted the professional name of Jéjalel, which, according to Etteilla, is the name of the fortieth of the seventy-two spirits or genii who surround the throne of God, and pursued a career as a professional cartomancer in Lyons. In one of his works,[22] Etteilla praises Hisler and Hugand, but denounces the remainder of the 150 of his pupils who practise fortune-telling professionally as charlatans, and, in a pamphlet of 1790,[23] he singles out one of them, M. d'Odoucet, by name for disparaging comment. Jéjalel (Hugand) published in 1789 a treatise on Tarot cartomancy entitled *Faites mieux, j'y consens, ou les instructions d'Isis*, issued with the imprimatur of the Société des interprètes, and, in 1792, wrote a *Nécrologie* or obituary of Etteilla, fulsomely extolling him but also including an advertisement for his own professional services. In 1791, the Société also published an anonymously written *Dictionnaire synonimique du Livre de Thot*, systematically tabulating all the possible meanings which each card could bear, when upright and when reversed. In 1792, after Etteilla's death, a member of the Société called de Bourecueille, who did not practise cartomancy professionally, but served as a customs officer at Toulon, wrote anxiously to Hugand to say that Etteilla had wanted Hugand to succeed him as head of the Société, but that d'Odoucet had seized the Society's cash-box and assumed the title; but Hugand did not wish to move to Paris for the purpose, and, by agreement with him and with Etteilla's widow, d'Odoucet achieved his ambition. In about 1802, d'Odoucet published his *Science des signes ou Médecine de l'esprit*, a work written very much in Etteilla's style and expounding his system of Tarot cartomancy.

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[22] *L'Homme à projets*, 2nd edition, 1791, p. 1.

There is no indication that d'Odoucet, or any other of Etteilla's disciples, had anything like his success, or that the Société des interprètes continued to function significantly. Nevertheless, Etteilla's work had laid the foundation of a tradition which survived well into the second half of the nineteenth century. This was primarily due to his having devised his cartomantic Tarot pack, which had an extensive progeny. The earliest of these to have survived is that labelled by Hoffmann and Kroppenstedt in their catalogue of fortune-telling cards 'Grand Etteilla I', of which an example is dated by them to 'about 1800'. In almost every respect, this copper-engraved pack follows Etteilla's ideas very exactly; one detail, however, prevents us from taking it to be the very one offered for sale by Etteilla. The numbering of cards 1 to 77 is precisely that of Etteilla; but the Fool is numbered 78, though it also bears the figure 0 in top centre (the main numerals serve as corner indices). Since the sole significant departure from Etteilla in the *Science des signes* is the statement that the Fool can either be regarded as coming after card 21, at the end of the *atouts majeures*, or as the 78th card, at the end of the entire series, it is possible that it was d'Odoucet who was responsible for the Grand Etteilla I pack.

Grand Etteilla I, which is still produced by the firm of Grimaud, has a certain charm. The actual designs of cards 9 to 12 are not the same as those illustrated by Etteilla, but have just the same iconography, save that the figures on cards 9 to 11 wear girdles bearing the name THOT. In fact, in almost every case in which Etteilla gives a detailed description of a card, such as for cards 1, 4, 5 and 8, the cards of Grand Etteilla I tally with it, with the sole exception that the naked figure on card 8 is a woman rather than a man. On card 2, representing Fire and corresponding to the Sun of the Tarot de Marseille, the sun has been replaced by a star; on card 3, representing Water and corresponding to the Moon, the moon itself is still present, but not very prominent. Card 13, corresponding to the Lovers, signifies Marriage according to Etteilla, and shows a couple being married by a Jewish priest. Card 15, corresponding to the Mountebank, shows a priest with a rod standing at an altar. Cards 6 and 7, whose subjects are never specified by Etteilla (they correspond to the 'false hieroglyphs' of the Empress and Emperor), depict, respectively, the heavenly bodies and birds and fishes, in conformity with the days of creation associated with them. Cards 1 to 12 bear the appropriate Zodiacal symbols. Etteilla's additional numerals are followed by an explanatory abbreviation: thus cards 2 to 5 have 'El.' following the numeral for the element they represent, cards 2 to 7 have 'Cré.' following the numeral for their associated day of creation, and cards 13 to 17 have 'Mort' following the numeral representing their alternative position; contrary to what Etteilla says, card 8 bears the inscription '7 Repos' to show that it represents the day of rest. The suit-signs of Batons and Swords assume more or less their Spanish form, and do not intersect; each numeral card has a yellow panel at the bottom, which, in Cups and Swords, is blank. In Batons, each such panel has a pattern corresponding to Etteilla's reconstruction of the Egyptian numerals from 1 to 10, according to the denomination of the card; these resemble arrangements of nails (it is possible that Etteilla had cuneiform in mind). The astrological symbols associated by Etteilla with the Coins from 2 to 10 are placed, not outside the main design, but within the suit-signs, which are otherwise mere circles; the 2 to 7 of Coins, which are associated with the planets, show, in their yellow panels, the figures of the corresponding classical gods. The Ace, which is associated with the Sun, shows, in the main design, a hand holding a figure of Apollo, and, in the yellow panel, a golden disc. The 8 to 10 of Coins have, in their yellow panels, astronomical diagrams; the suit-signs on the court cards of Coins resemble those on the 10. Besides the numeral indicating its sequential position, every one of the 78 cards has an inscription at top and bottom, to indicate, not its name, but its cartomantic significance, whether upright or reversed: these inscriptions tally exactly with the meanings assigned by Etteilla to the cards.[24] Even though this pack was probably not that designed by Etteilla himself, it gives us a very accurate idea of what his pack was like.

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[23] *Aperçu sur la nouvelle école de la Magie*; see J.-B. Millet-Saint-Pierre, op. cit., p. 28.

The vogue for cartomancy continued unabated. The great practitioner of the period from 1793 to 1830 was Mlle Marie-Anne Adelaide Lenormand, who died in 1843; her date of birth is usually given as 1772, but it was more probably 1768. She attained a celebrity far surpassing that of Etteilla, or, indeed, of any other fortune-teller before or since, and was, or at least gave herself out to be, the confidante of the Empress Joséphine, whose 'secret memoirs' she published and from whom it has been suggested that she obtained some of the information on the basis of which she is supposed to have made some remarkable prophecies. Mlle Lenormand wrote voluminously; not, however, about methods of cartomancy, but about her own career and her association with people of importance. Her concern was not to popularise a theory or a practical system, but to propagate a belief in her personal powers as a sibyl. She was far too grand a figure to appear as a follower of Etteilla or of anyone else; but, for her cartomancy, she employed both the regular pack and the 'Egyptian' Tarot cards that Etteilla had invented.[25] No one not mesmerised by Etteilla's manic personality could read through his verbose and turgid writings; but the cartomantic pack that he had presented as the authentic book of Thoth was too rich a treasure for those attracted by cartomancy to abandon. According to D'Allemagne, there was, from 1830 onwards, a great vogue in France for specially designed cartomantic packs;[26] this date should probably be made considerably earlier. Among these were that known as the Sybille des Salons, first produced in 1827, and based on the 32-card regular French-suited pack, and the Grand Jeu de Mlle Lenormand, which first appeared in 1845 and is based on the 52-card pack; both are still obtainable to-day. Among these, several cartomantic Tarot packs, known variously as the Grand Jeu des Tarots Égyptiens and the Grand Oracle des Dames, and all deriving from Etteilla's pack, took their place. Hoffmann and Kroppenstedt recognise only two of these, which they label Grand Etteilla II and III, but there were others. One of the earliest, of which I know no surviving example, appears to have been one in which the subjects have as far as possible been given a Biblical flavour: thus card 9 (Justice) has become Solomon, 11 (Fortitude) David, 12 (Prudence) Moses, 20 (the Wheel of Fortune) Nebuchadnezzar and 21 (the Chariot) Rehoboam. The evidence for this version consists in a book entitled *L'art de tirer les cartes et les tarots, ou Cartomancie française, égyptienne, italienne et allemande*, by Aldegonde Perenna, Polish sibyl, edited by Collin de Plancy, published in Paris in 1826: it contains instructions on telling fortunes first with the Piquet pack and then with the 'Tarots or Egyptian cards', the latter based on Etteilla's interpretations, but, as the editor remarks, referring deprecatingly to Etteilla, 'of an incontestable clarity'. An anonymous pamphlet, incorporating almost all of this part of Mlle Perenna's book, and without any alteration to the names of the cards, was later issued with an edition of Grand Etteilla I, and is still distributed by Grimaud with their current edition of that pack.

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[24] See the third *cahier* of the *Manière de se récréer*. For illustrations of Grand Etteilla I, see D. Hoffmann and E. Kroppenstedt, *Wahrsagekarten*, Bielefeld, 1972, no. 66, and S.R. Kaplan, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, New York, 1978, pp. 141, 252.

[25] On Mlle Lenormand's life and career, and, more particularly, the date of her birth, see Louis du Bois, *De Mlle Le Normand et ses deux biographies récemment publiées*, Paris, 1843, and A. Marquiset, *La Célèbre Mlle Lenormand*, Paris, 1911. For the memoirs of the Empress Josephine, see Mlle M.A. Le Normand, *Mémoires historiques et secrets de l'impératrice Joséphine*, two vols., Paris, 1820. For a mention by her of her consultation of the Tarot, see Mlle M.A. Le Normand, *La Sibylle au congrès d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, Paris, 1819, p. 203.

[26] H.-R. D'Allemagne, *Les Cartes à jouer*, vol. I, Paris, 1906, p. 482.

A version in which an attempt has been made to emphasise the supposedly Egyptian character of the pack is mentioned by D'Allemagne as dating from 1845;[27] the King of Coins has become Sesostris, and the Queen of Coins the Queen of Sheba. An even more Egyptianised version is in the British Museum.[28] Etteilla's designs for cards 1 and 8 have been replaced by an ancient Egyptian with a staff and an Egyptian woman surrounded by implements of divination; cards 2, 3 and 5 are labelled with the names of Osiris, Anubis and Isis, and Apis and Horus; most of the court cards have acquired Egyptian personalities and Egyptian names. In Grand Etteilla II, which perhaps originated about 1840, some of Etteilla's designs have been retained; the Coins have lost their astrological symbols, and have become wreaths enclosing a quatrefoil, and, in every suit, each of the lower panels on the numeral cards contains a vignette bearing no relation to Etteilla's interpretations. Among the first twenty-one cards, 1, 9, 10, 12, 15 and 21 have been redesigned; on 1 there is no longer any light, but only chaos; on 15, the priest has been replaced by a wizard, with a manikin standing on the table in front of him; and on 21 the chariot has become a four-wheeled carriage, with a canopy bearing crescents, bearing a bearded man of sinister appearance. On this pack, the inscriptions at top and bottom still indicate the significance of each card, in accordance with those assigned by Etteilla or by the *Dictionnaire synonimique*; but, in addition, each card bears at the side an inscription indicating its subject. These are: 1 – Chaos; 2 – Light; 3 – the Plants; 4 – the Heavens; 5 – Man and the Quadrupeds; 6 – the Stars; 7 – the Birds and the Fishes; 8 – Rest; 9 – Justice; 10 – Temperance; 11 – Fortitude; 12 – Prudence; 13 – the High Priest; 14 – the Devil; 15 – the Magician or the Mountebank; 16 – the Last Judgment; 17 – Death; 18 – the Capuchin; 19 – the Tower struck by Lightning; 20 – the Wheel of Fortune; 21 – the African Despot; 78 – Madness or the Alchemist. A comparison with the table of correspondences between Etteilla's numbering and that of the Tarot de Marseille, given earlier, will show that cards 1, 3 to 8, 12 and 13 have all completely lost their original subjects. The Egyptianised pack mentioned by D'Allemagne has the same names for cards 7, 9 to 12, 14, 16, 17 and 20, and for the rest has: 1 – the Man whose fortune is to be told; 2 – the Sun; 3 – the Moon; 4 – the Stars; 5 – the Seasons; 6 – the Heavens; 8 – the Woman whose fortune is to be told; 13 – Marriage; 15 – the Magician; 18 – the Hermit; 19 – the Temple; 21 – the Triumphant Man; 78 – the Fool. Here, given the disturbance of the order, there is more agreement with the Tarot de Marseille; but, in the Egyptianised pack in the British Museum, this has been lost again. It will have been noted that, in all these packs, the Fool is numbered 78; this is a persistent feature of all Tarot packs derived from Etteilla's ever after Grand Etteilla I. Finally, probably in the 1860s, there appeared Grand Etteilla III, in which Etteilla's designs have been transformed beyond recognition, with the intention of achieving a mediaeval style, but the inscriptions, at top, bottom and sides, are exactly the same as in Grand Etteilla II, and, accordingly, the subjects are also the same, though on card 5 there are no longer the symbols of the four Evangelists, but four genuine quadrupeds.

The tradition inaugurated by Etteilla had taken on an independent life. The designers of these various cartomantic Tarot packs did not go back for their inspiration to the traditional Tarot cards which Etteilla had 'corrected'; they appealed to his interpretations of the cartomantic significance of the cards, as preserved in pamphlets setting out watered-down versions of his system, or to their own imaginations when they wanted to give a Biblical, Egyptian or mediaeval flavour to their cards. The purchasers, and probably the designers, of these so-called Egyptian Tarot packs were hardly, if at all, aware of the traditional Tarot cards used for play, and most of Etteilla's romancing about the book of Thoth had been forgotten: the enduring effect of Etteilla's work had been to create one particular type of cartomantic pack among the several that could be obtained.

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[27] Ibid., p. 483.

[28] F 85 in Willshire's catalogue; cf. F 21 in O'Donoghue's catalogue: for illustration, see Kaplan, op. cit., p. 143. For illustrations of Grand Etteilla II, see *Wahrsagekarten*, no. 69, and catalogue of the Fournier Museum, French section, no. 57. For illustrations of Grand Etteilla III, see *Wahrsagekarten*, no. 70, *Playing Cards ... from the Collection of Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, vol. II, London, 1893, pp. 61-2, and Kaplan, p. 142; for a later variant, see Kaplan, p. 144, and Fournier catalogue, Spanish section, no. 560.

Of the lady cartomancers who succeeded Mlle Lenormand, none achieved anything like her success. Mme Clément, who wrote *Le Corbeau sanglant ou l'avenir dévoilé*, evidently wished her clients to take her very seriously; her *Le Flambeau de l'avenir* (Paris, 1852) is a curious astrological prolegomenon to cartomancy, based on Etteilla, though more coherently written. Mlle A. Lelièvre, on the other hand, was a more light-hearted character; in her *Prophéties de la nouvelle Sybille* (Paris, 1848), she recounts many apocryphal anecdotes about fortune-telling, disclaims any pretensions to have been the pupil of Mlle Lenormand and deflates the claim of an unnamed other (probably Mme Clément) to have been the sole pupil of that famous lady. Both these professional cartomancers employed the Egyptian Tarots, as did Mlle Julia Orsini, whose work *Le Grand Etteilla ou l'art de tirer les cartes*, published in about 1853, reproduces the lists of meanings given in the *Dictionnaire synonimique* and a list of questions given by Etteilla as answerable by recourse to the book of Thoth, together with a simplified account of Etteilla's cartomantic method and illustrations of all the cards of Grand Etteilla II. Numerous other publications kept the tradition alive. The *Petit manuel du devin et du sorcier*, by Nathaniel Moulth, published about 1854, besides sections on astrology and the interpretation of dreams, gives a comprehensive account of methods of divination with the regular pack, and then several methods, mostly deriving from Etteilla, with what appears to be the Egyptianised form of Etteilla's Tarot pack mentioned by D'Allemagne; Moulth, who describes himself as a magician who can command spirits and effect a thousand other marvels, criticises severely Etteilla's theory of the Egyptian origin of the Tarot pack. A book by Mlle Lemarchand, *Les Récreâtions de la cartomancie*, published about 1867, is refreshingly unpretentious; in a disarming foreword, she says that no one can really foretell the future, and that cartomancy is no more than an amusement. Her book illustrates the cards of Grand Etteilla III under the title Grand Oracle des Dames, and describes the method expounded by Julia Orsini. A book by Antonio Magus, called *L'Art de tirer les cartes*, first published in 1875, gives a sketch of the history of cartomancy, mostly lifted from Mlle Lelièvre, and an account of Tarot cartomancy with illustrations of cards from a pack which seems a cross between Grand Etteilla III and the strongly Egyptianised pack in the British Museum. Doubtless these books, which I happen to have seen, are only a small selection from a vast and ephemeral literature sustaining in being the cartomantic method devised by the unstable genius of Etteilla in 1783.

Without Etteilla, there is no reason to suppose that anyone would have hit on the idea of using the Tarot pack for divination: most practitioners of fortune-telling are singluarly lacking in originality, and it was in Paris that the more successful ones practised, whereas, as I have already remarked the traditional Tarot pack and the game played with it were virtually unknown in Paris throughout the entire eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And, without de Gébelin, it is improbable that the idea would have occurred to Etteilla. Nevertheless, although the tradition that Etteilla founded did not become moribund, it very soon ceased to be a tradition of fortune-telling with the Tarot pack, in the proper sense; it became a method of fortune-telling with a special pack devised for the purpose, which were called 'Egyptian Tarots' but whose connection with the traditional Tarot pack was almost impossible to discern for anyone who did not know the history of the matter. To revive the mystique that associated the traditional Tarot pack with the occult needed a new impetus. It received that impetus from a man who called himself Éliphas Lévi, with the publication in 1855 of the first of his many works on magic, *Le Dogme de la haute magie*.

(ii) *The second phase in France*

Eliphas Lévi's real name was Alphonse-Louis Constant. Born in Paris of poor parents in 1810, he was educated at the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, and was ordained a deacon; he left, in 1836, just before he was due to be ordained a priest. After a year spent as a schoolmaster and a season as an actor in a touring company, he began a career as a writer and illustrator, producing devotional works and treatises advocating social reform, one of which, *La Bible de la liberté*, judged a subversive publication, earned him eight months in prison in 1841. After this he served for a time at Évreux as a deacon, and then returned to Paris to resume his literary career, though continuing to make periodic visits to Évreux. In 1845 he formed two simultaneous liaisons there, one with the assistant head-mistress of the local girls' school, the other with one of her pupils, Noémi Cadiot. On leaving school in 1846, Noémi went to live with Constant in his rooms in Paris; threatened by her father with an action for seducing a minor, he married her. Three months later, the assistant head-mistress bore him a son, who was to attend his father's funeral but never to meet him during his life. Constant continued to write both on politics and on religion, and, soon after his marriage, served a further six months in prison for sedition: his wife also wrote, and began a career as a sculptress. The couple were poor, but not destitute; their daughter died in infancy. He styled himself the abbé Constant, and habitually wore a monastic habit; he had, indeed, the characteristic pyschology of the 'spoiled priest'.

In 1852 Constant conceived a fascination for magic which was to remain his prime preoccupation for the rest of his life: in his new role of magus, he Hebraised his name to Éliphas Lévi Zahed, and henceforward used the first two of these names as his pen-name. In 1853, his wife left him for the Marquis de Montferrier; twelve years later, she obtained a nullification of the marriage, but Lévi never remarried, nor, so far as appears, had any further relations with women. Instead, he devoted himself to his new interest: dressed in a long robe, of stocky build and with a luxuriant beard, he fitted the part of magus to perfection. In 1854 he visted England, and met various people interested in the occult; he was pressed to perform magical feats, but demurred until finally persuaded by a lady to evoke a spirit from the dead: with magical rituals he evoked the spirit of Apollonius of Tyana, and repeated the feat on two subsequent occasions, but apparently without witnesses. Returning to Paris, he published in 1855 his *Dogme de la haute magie*, and, in 1856, its companion volume, the *Rituel de la haute magie*. In 1860 there appeared his *Histoire de la magie*, in 1861 *La Clé des grands mystères* and in 1865 *La Science des esprits*. The *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie*, soon issued as a single volume, gained him at once a great reputation among all interested in the occult, a reputation which swelled with the years. He lived in a small apartment cluttered with magical bric-à-brac, and there received a succession of admiring and eccentric visitors. He died on 31 May 1875, after a visit from a priest and probably reconciled with the Church.[29]

It is from Lévi's work, above all from the *Dogme et rituel*, that the whole of the modern occultist movement stems. At first glance, Lévi's success is bewildering: his style is bombastic, the intellectual content is thin, the factual information is inaccurate, and the claims advanced range from the unintelligible through the obscure to the frankly puerile. His leading idea is that the classic works of occult literature state, in symbolic language, the existence of a medium which 'profane science' has investigated under four of its manifestations – heat, light, electricity and magnetism – but which has other manifestations, in the form of magical phenomena.[30] 'An immense physical secret was ... hidden under the cabalistic parables of the ancients. This secret we have succeeded in deciphering ... Here it is: (1) the four imponderable fluids [of the alchemists] are nothing but the diverse manifestations of one same universal agent, which is light; (2) light is the fire which serves for the Great Work [the transmutation of metals] under the form of electricity; (3) the human will directs the vital light by means of the nervous system; (4) the secret agent of the Great Work, the Azoth of the sages, the living and life-giving gold of the philosophers, the universal metallic productive agent, is MAGNETIZED ELECTRICITY.'[31] This agent is elsewhere called by Lévi 'the Great Magical Agent' and 'the Astral Light'. It 'has a direct action on the nerves', and can conversely be directed by the will. This is the explanation of all the classic magical phenomena: by operating on the Astral Light, the adept can call up apparitions of the dead, render himself invisible by making others unable to see him, predict the future, convert base metals to gold, revive the recently dead, cure illnesses, control the will of others, etc., etc. Lévi even believed that he had found out how to square the circle and to make a perpetual motion machine: 'By a revolution about its own centre, the square produces a circle equal to itself, and this is the quadrature of the circle';[32] a clockwork mechanism with two opposed springs, 'so that the one in unwinding winds up the other', will run for ever.[33] These are but two of many aspects of the one Great Magical Secret.[34]

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[29] For information about the lives of Éliphas Lévi and of his followers, I am particularly indebted to Christopher McIntosh, *Éliphas Lévi and the French Occult Revival*, London, 1972.

[30] See E. Lévi, *Transcendental Magic: its Doctrine and Ritual*, translated by A.E. Waite from *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie*, London, 1968, pp. 54-5.

[31] E. Lévi, *The Key to the Mysteries*, translated by Aleister Crowley from *La Clé des grands mystères*, London, 1969, pp. 140-1. Even Aleister Crowley feels forced to add a footnote claiming that the 'magnetised electricity' is a joke on Lévi's part. There is, however, no indication that it is not meant quite literally. A little later, Lévi asks, 'If electricity can move a ... body without one touching it, is it impossible to give by magnetism a direction to electricity, and to produce, thus naturally, signs and writings?' (ibid., p. 144). If this is a joke, there is no saying which of Lévi's other utterances we may safely take as seriously meant.

It may well be wondered how such preposterous nonsense ever attracted attention at all. How did Éliphas Lévi come to be considered a great theorist and practitioner of magic? Already in the eighteenth century, there had been, especially in France, a whole troop of magicians and occultists of various kinds who achieved a degree of celebrity or notoriety: the comte de Saint-Germain, Martines de Pasqually, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, the abbé Joseph-Antoine Pernety and Giacomo Cagliostro, among many others; and the succession continued through the first half of the nineteenth century. Why, then, did Éliphas Lévi achieve a success far beyond any of his predecessors? Why did his work appear as a new beginning, initiating a new era in the history of occultism and forming the source of the entire occultist movement from his time to the present?

The answer is, I think, that he offered magic on easy terms. To be a follower of Lévi, one was not required to become a Freemason,[35] nor to join any other of the various secret orders – the Elect Cohens, the Martinists, the Rosicrucians – which flourished from the mid-eighteenth century on. Still less did one have to participate in esoteric religious rites, such as those conducted by Pierre Michel Eugène Vintras, alias Élie-Stratanael (1807-1875), or his successor the abbé Joseph-Antoine Boullan (1824-1893). Magic was not presented by Lévi to his readers as a mystery which he could only partially disclose and they would be able to penetrate only with difficulty: although he occasionally spoke of an incommunicable secret, for the most part he claims to have discovered all and to be revealing all. Nor did the acceptance of Lévi's teaching require a change of life-style, or even an abandonment of religious belief: although much in the *Dogme et rituel* is rather plainly in conflict with Christianity, in his later writings he professed, indeed insisted on, adherence to Catholic faith and practice. In general, the most striking feature of Lévi's writing on magic is its equivocal character. While some passages suggest that Catholic doctrine requires reinterpretation in an occult sense of which the official Church is unaware, others express a whole-hearted acceptance of it. Likewise, while Lévi himself called up spirits, conducted unsuccessful alchemical experiments, supplied people with talismans to protect them from malign magic and made predictions, subsequently falsified, about public events, and while the *Rituel* gives fairly exact prescriptions for conducting magical ceremonies of many various kinds, he elsewhere deprecated magical practices including even that of divination. It is characteristic of him that while, in the *Rituel*, he asserts not only that certain alchemists made true gold, but even that he has made their secret public, in the *Dogme* he had attached far more importance to a purely spiritual interpretation of the alchemical doctrines. Lévi's magic was, as people say, 'all in the head': the emphasis was on the theory, not on the practice; and the theory itself sounded grandiose, but amounted to very little – at any rate, to very little that would commit one to any definite belief or course of action.

Like other magical writings, what Lévi's works lack in precision of intellectual substance they make up for in profusion of symbolism. Their magical symbolism and doctrine are, for the most part, borrowed from the standard sources of European occultism since the Renaissance: in descending order of importance, in Lévi's eyes, the Cabala; alchemy; the Hermetic books; and astrology. The Cabala was an esoteric system of Jewish mystical theology, developed in Spain in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, although appealing to a book, the *Sefer Yetzira* (Book of Creation), written perhaps in the sixth century. Its doctrine was pantheist in tendency: there are ten *sefiroth*, attributes or emanations of God, corresponding to the numbers from 1 to 10, and forming the channels through which the various lower worlds came into being. The Cabala relied much on complicated symbolism relating to numbers and to letters: the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet represent twenty-two paths connecting the ten *sefiroth*, and together with them making up the thirty-two paths of secret wisdom. The Hebrew alphabet contains the Name or Names of God; by a complex system the Cabala assigned numerical values to letters and to words, a process to which it attached a profound significance. Various Christian writers of the Renaissance were impressed by the Cabala and adapted it for Christian purposes; because of the strong magical ingredient in it, it entered the stream of European magical tradition. The Hermetic books consist principally in a corpus of fifteen Greek writings purporting to have been composed by an ancient Egyptian sage named Hermes, called Trismegistus, the Thrice Great. One of these books, the *Asclepius*, was known in Latin translation in the Middle Ages (the original is lost); the other fourteen were first brought to the West from Macedonia in 1460 on the orders of Cosimo de' Medici, and were received with the deepest respect, since the belief that Hermes Trismegistus, their author, was a near-contemporary of Moses, and that his work was the source of much of Plato's philosophy, was generally accepted and had the authority of Lactantius and of St Augustine. The Hermetic writings therefore became one of the prime sources of Renaissance magic. In 1614, however, Isaac Casaubon, applying the new methods of textual criticism, demonstrated that they were in fact written in the Christian era; he thought that they were Christian forgeries, but they are now generally believed to be of Greek pagan authorship, of the second and third centuries A.D. They are not all by the same author, and are of a gnostic character, heavily impregnated with magic; besides the fifteen treatises of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, many other works on practical magic, known in the Middle Ages, were attributed to Hermes Trismegistus.[36]

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[32] *Transcendental Magic*, p. 37.

[33] Ibid., p. 57.

[34] Ibid., p. 17.

[35] In 1861, Lévi did join a Masonic Lodge, but later resigned from it.

With one exception, therefore, Lévi's sources, and those of his neo-occultist followers, were the same as those used by the Renaissance magicians. Like them, the neo-occultists claimed to be expounding a wisdom that had come down from remote antiquity, and had been overlaid and distorted by the teachings of the Church. Like them, too, they were not primarily concerned with mere practical recipes for divination or conjuration: they were advancing a whole intellectual system for interpreting the universe and its operations. But, for all that, the significance of these magical doctrines, as propounded by their nineteenth-century adepts, was wholly different from that which they had possessed during the sixteenth century. However little rational basis the Renaissance exponents of magic may have had for their teaching, it at least formed a coherent body of belief, coherent not only internally, but with what men knew or thought they knew of the world. For this reason, although it was at odds with religion, it was not then intrinsically at odds with science; it did not demand the repudiation of the ordinary canons of empirical evidence. But, by the nineteenth century, a great deal was known that had not been known during the Renaissance. The development of chemistry had exploded the entire structure of alchemical theory. The Ptolemaic system of astronomy had long been abandoned: it was known that the Sun and the Moon are not, in the proper sense, planets, and that the Earth is; two planets unknown to the ancients had been discovered, Uranus in 1781 and Neptune in 1846. It was also known that the Hermetic books were not the work of a sage of remote antiquity. Éliphas Lévi and his school, however, paid not the slightest attention to the empirical knowledge available to them and to their readers. They insisted on treating Hermes Trismegistus as a historical character and as the author of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, without so much as making a gesture towards refuting Casaubon's dating. They appealed to the theories of the alchemists as if the science of chemistry simply did not exist. They accepted astrology in its traditional form, as if the Copernican system had never been enunciated, let alone universally received. It is possible to imagine men who accepted the fundamental presuppositions of the magical view of the universe engaging in sustained labours to adapt them to the existing empirical knowledge of the constitution of the universe, as Giordano Bruno had constructed a heliocentric system of magical theory; then, at least, they would have created a theory which, granted those presuppositions, could be rationally believed. But the French neo-occultists attempted nothing of the kind:[37] they simply passed by existing scientific and historical knowledge, because they were completely unconcerned with rational considerations. Their writings were designed to appeal to those who wanted religiosity without religion, who hankered after the bizarre and arcane and were flattered to think themselves the heirs of a secret and ancient wisdom of which the world at large remained ignorant; and such readers would accept bare assertion unsupported by evidence or even by an attempt to remove the evidence against it.

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[36] See Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, New York, 1964, a mine of information about Renaissance Hermetism and Renaissance magic generally.

[37] Just one of Lévi's followers, R. Falconnier, speaks in an

To the mish-mash of Cabalistic, alchemical, Hermetic and astrological doctrines which he propagated, Éliphas Lévi added one new ingredient: the Tarot. He took over from de Gébelin and Etteilla the theses that the Tarot pack was of immense antiquity and embodied a symbolic representation of a body of profound and ancient wisdom: 'The marvellous book of the Tarot' is, he says, 'of all books the most primitive, the key of prophecies and dogmas, in a word, the inspiration of inspired works.'[38] Like Etteilla, he attributed it to Hermes Trismegistus, calling it 'the Book of Hermes'; and he regarded it as dating from long before Moses, from the time of Enoch.[39] This Tarot which he so extolled he could not allow to be identified with the 'Egyptian Tarot' designed by Etteilla, or any of its various derivatives, the standard tool, as he remarks, of the professional cartomancers, since that could no longer be taken seriously: he had to get back to the traditional Tarot pack, which, ignorant as he was of its actual history, was for him the Tarot de Marseille. Since, nevertheless, he borrowed much from Etteilla, his attitude to him was perforce ambivalent: he was, Lévi tells us, 'on the threshold of discovering everything that is concealed' in the Tarot, but he 'was destined to die at the gate of the sanctuary without ever penetrating behind the veil', and produced only a 'misconstrued and mutilated Tarot'.[40] Lévi was not primarily concerned, like Etteilla, to promote the use of the Tarot pack for fortune-telling, still less to set himself up as a cartomancer. The pack could, indeed, be used for that purpose with complete confidence, and its oracles were always rigorously true; and Lévi himself so used it, as he tested every kind of divination: but this was only a secondary use for the cards, which would reveal far more profound secrets. 'An imprisoned person with no other book than the Tarot, if he knew how to use it, could in a few years acquire universal knowledge, and would be able to speak on all subjects with unequalled learning and inexhaustible eloquence.'[41] For Lévi, the Tarot was a source of magical doctrine and symbolism, like the works of the Cabalists and the Hermetic writings: more, it was the key to these, the 'universal key of magical works'. This key, lost for centuries, Lévi himself had recovered, and thus had been able 'to understand the enigmas of every sphinx and to penetrate all sanctuaries'.[42] He therefore published no separate work on the Tarot, but alluded to it repeatedly in all his writings, and, especially, throughout the *Dogme* and the *Rituel*. Ever after Lévi, it has been axiomatic for every occultist writer that the Tarot ranks with the Cabala, the Hermetic books and the teachings of the alchemists and astrologers as a primary source of magical doctrine. The Renaissance theorists of magic would have been amazed to see a pack of playing cards elevated to this rank, and it is hardly surprising that it was among those to whom the particular pack selected for this honour was not familiar as the instrument of a game that the theory appeared plausible. But, once Lévi had succeeded in investing the Tarot pack, and the word 'Tarot', with almost the same numinous quality as that which the Cabalists ascribed to the Hebrew alphabet and to the Divine Name itself, it was not to be expected that occultists could bear to relinquish so rich a source of symbolic material.

In fact, the Tarot was for Lévi not so much an independent source of magical theory; rather, by associating it with alchemical, astrological and, above all, Cabalistic symbolism, he made it part of one complex source. In connecting the Tarot pack with the Cabala, Lévi stated that the ten numeral cards of each suit represent the ten *sefiroth* or divine emanations, the court cards represent the stages of human life, and the four suits correspond to the four letters of the Tetragrammaton, the Divine name.[43] But by far

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astrological context of the Earth, Uranus and Neptune as planets, but in practice falls back on the usual geocentric seven.

[38] *Transcendental Magic*, p. 103.

[39] Ibid., pp. 13, 378-411, 18.

[40] Ibid, pp. 177-8, 287.

[41] Ibid., p. 394. Cf. p. 177.

[42] Ibid., p. 378.

[43] Ibid., pp. 101-3.

the greater part of Lévi's attention to the Tarot pack was directed towards the triumph cards and the Fool, comprising what he called the twenty-two Keys of the Tarot. These, following de Gébelin and de M.***, he associated with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and, through this association, was able to apply to the Tarot cards all the mystic significance which the Cabalists had attributed to that alphabet. The association with the Hebrew letters was to play a crucial part in most later occultist interpretations of the Tarot, which by this means was intertwined with the Cabala. The association was devoid of historical justification; its arbitrary character, and that of the consequent interpretation of the cards, is shown by the inability of the occultists to agree over which cards should be associated with which Hebrew lettters, despite their near unanimity that there must be some such association. Lévi did not follow Etteilla in rearranging the order of the triumph cards, but left the Tarot de Marseille order undisturbed. But, even on this basis, there remained two questions giving scope for divergent answers. Taking the letters in fixed alphabetical order, how should the triumph cards be arranged to yield the correct correlation with the letters? De Gébelin and de M.*** had arranged them in *descending* numerical sequence, but Lévi disagreed: followed by all subsequent occultists, he ranked them in *ascending* numerical order. But there was then a second question: where should the Fool be placed in the sequence? Lévi's solution was an eccentric one: he took the Fool as ranking between the XX (Judgment) and the XXI (the World); sometimes he even numbers the Fool XXI and the World XXII. This insertion of the Fool between the two highest triumphs was copied by all the French occultists after him; not, however, as we shall see, by those in Britain. Lévi thus made the I (the *Bateleur*) correspond to Aleph, the II to Beth, and so on; the XX corresponds to Resh, the Fool to Shin and the XXI (the World) to Tau.[44] This specific correlation of the cards to the Hebrew letters likewise remained standard for most subsequent French occultists; but, again, their British counterparts disagreed. The names of the triumph cards Lévi interfered with very little. Sometimes he describes the XXI (the World) as representing the Crown, the first of the ten Cabalistic *sefiroth*; he follows de M.*** in regarding the VI (Love) as depicting man between vice and virtue; the VII he sometimes calls the Chariot of Hermes, and the X the Wheel of Ezechiel; and, naturally, the I, II and V are sometimes called respectively the Magician, the Priestess and the Hierophant.[45] But in his verbal descriptions Lévi went in for surprisingly little 'correction' of the Tarot de Marseille, presumably not wanting his strictures on Etteilla for such alterations to fall on his own head. One illustration in the *Rituel*, however, shows his conception of the Chariot (VII), which he depicts as drawn by two sphinxes, one white and one black, in place of horses, as adorned with a *lingam* (phallus) and as ridden by a man wearing a crown of pentagrams; the card bears the Arabic numeral 7 and the Hebrew letter Zain.[46] Lévi dreamed of publishing a complete set of Tarot cards to his own designs, of which this is an example, but never accomplished the project. To each of the twenty-two Keys he assigned a significance which was a blend of the subject shown on the card and the Cabalistic meaning of the corresponding Hebrew letter: thus, among other things, I (the *Bateleur*) represents Being, II (the Popess) represents Gnosis, IX (the Hermit) represents Prudence, XIV (Temperance) represents the heaven of the Sun, climates and seasons, and so on for the other cards.

With muted acknowledgments to de Gébelin and Etteilla, Lévi claimed to have been the first to 'have discovered intact and still unknown this key of all doctrines and all philosophies of the old world'; 'without the Tarot', he tells us, 'the Magic of the ancients is a closed book', but the Tarot had been lost to the Church 'at the epoch of the Gnostic and Manichean heresies', thus rendering the Apocalypse of St John and the prophecy of Ezechiel, perhaps even the entire Bible, no longer interpretable.[47] At the same time, he did not want to maintain that the occult meaning of the Tarot had been a secret entirely lost since ancient times, to be uncovered only by such dubious witnesses as de Gébelin and Etteilla: for, if the classic occultist writers, the Cabalists and Hermetists of the Renaissance and after, were ignorant of this indispensable key, then their writings would be worthless and could not be cited as authoritative. Lévi had, therefore, to maintain that earlier occultists were aware of the Tarot, but concealed their knowledge under veils, making only oblique allusions to it: why they should do this, when they spoke so openly on other occult matters, he does not explain. He accordingly affected to discern such oblique allusions in many sources. That of which he made the most was Guillaume Postel's *Absconditorum a Constitutione Mundi Clavis* (Key to Things Hidden from the Foundation of the World) of 1546. He refers over and again to the diagram given by Postel in this work,[48] which he reproduces as:

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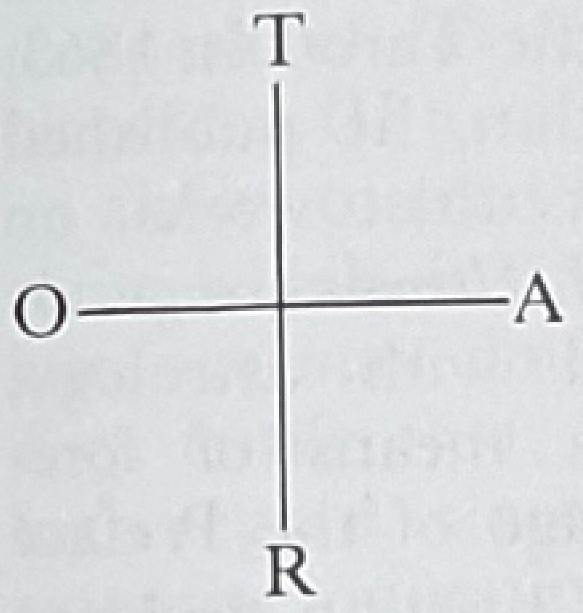
[44] See footnote 135.

[45] See *Transcendental Magic*, pp. 393, 388, 390, 386-7, 339-40, and *The Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum*, translated and edited by W. Wynn Westcott, London, 1896, pp. 3-4, 22, 32, 41.

[46] *Transcendental Magic*, p. 389.

[47] Ibid., pp. 382, 383, 398, 3-4, 378.



and says is meant to be read either as ROTA or as TAROT. In fact, as A.E. Waite pointed out, the diagram is not Postel's at all: it is a small fragment of a complex diagram given by the editor of an edition of the book issued a century after the original one, designed to elucidate chapter XV, and the reading ROTA is plainly the only one intended.[49] Lévi also claims a hidden reference to the Tarot pack in Louis Claude de Saint-Martin's *Tableau naturel des rapports qui existent entre Dieu, l'homme et l'univers* (Edinburgh, 1782), on the sole ground that it has twenty-two chapters, as he himself had divided both the *Dogme de la haute magie* and the *Rituel*;[50] but there is actually not the slightest trace of any correspondence between the chapters of de Saint-Martin's book and either the Tarot triumphs or the Hebrew letters. On the same absurd ground, Lévi claims a connection between the Tarot cards and the Apocalypse of St John (which actually has twenty-two chapters), and between them and Cardano's *De Subtilitate* (1554), which has in fact twenty-one books.[51] Other attributions by Lévi of hidden references to the Tarot pack lack all warrant whatsoever save his bare assertion: in the writings of Jacques Gaffarel, in a Cabalistic work quoted in Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata*, and in Trithemius's *Polygraphia*.[52] On the basis of these wholly spurious references, Lévi is able to claim that 'the tradition of this secret has never been interrupted from the first ages of the Cabala to our own times'.[53] These claims attain a climax of fantasy when Lévi speaks of the origin of the Tarot. Though we hear a certain amount about Isis, Osiris and Typhon, and much about the wisdom of the Hermetic writings, especially the *Emerald Table*, magic is for Lévi primarily of Jewish origin. Hence he declares that the doctrine of Moses and the prophets is fundamentally identical with that of the ancient

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[48] See, e.g., *Transcendental Magic*, pp. 56, 101, 382-3, 396.

[49] The diagram does not appear in the original edition, published at Basle in 1546, but only in the Amsterdam edition of 1646, edited by A.V. Frankenberg; there, it is appended to a note plainly headed *Clavis Editoris ad Clavem Authoris* (The Editor's Key to the Author's Key); the diagram itself is entitled *Tabula Clavigera ad Intelligentiam Cap. XV facilius assequendam, abbreviata ROTA*. The diagram is actually very complex, and shows a key, on the wards of which are written:

D E U S
H O M O
R O T A

On the ring of the key are indeed the letters ROTA, arranged as in Lévi's diagram, but with no cross connecting them; between these letters are the words *Pulsate et aperietur vobis*. Other inscriptions occur on the shaft and around the ring, and inside the ring is a square enclosing a circle enclosing a triangle with lines from the vertices to the midpoint, with further letters spelling HOMO, ENS and SPE (or PES). I cannot pretend to understand this diagram, but I have not the least doubt that Frankenberg intended to spell the word ROTA (wheel), and not the word TAROT.

[50] See *Transcendental Magic*, pp. 382, 396, and *The Key to the Mysteries*, p. 142.

[51] See *The Key to the Mysteries*, pp. 141-2. It is true that Cardano's book 20 happens to be entitled *De Angelis seu Intelligentiis* and his book 21 *De Deo & Universo*; but, if he had intended any correspondence with the Tarot triumphs, he would have made *De Daemonibus* book 14 or 15 instead of book 19. Cardano was perfectly well acquainted with the game of Tarot, to which he refers in his work on gaming, and would have referred to it openly if he had intended any reference to it; conceits involving allusions to the Tarot triumphs were a common device in sixteenth-century Italian literature.

[52] *Transcendental Magic*, pp. 103, 175 and 285, and *The Key to the Mysteries*, p. 141. Lévi's remark about the *Polygraphia*, that Trithemius without doubt had the Tarot in mind 'when composing his learned combinations', is typical. The *Polygraphia* is a code-book, with letters corresponding to whole words, using a 24-letter alphabet: if, in book I or book II, one writes any word from the first list, followed by any from the second, any from the third, and so on, one will obtain an intelligible sentence, so that any message can be encoded into something of harmless appearance. The Tarot pack has, and, by the nature of the case, could have, nothing to do with it. The combinations are ingenious, but in no way learned; it seems dubious whether Lévi understood the purpose of the book.

[53] *The Key to the Mysteries*, p. 142.

Egyptians;[54] and, while he accepts Hermes Trismegistus as the inventor of the Tarot, and illustrates, with designs in a genuinely Egyptian style, the Ace and 2 of Cups and triumph 21 from the 'primitive Egyptian Tarot',[55] he identifies Hermes with the patriarch Enoch, whom he also designates the father of the Cabala.[56] Thus, for Lévi, the Tarot, the Cabala and the Hermetic tradition all have a common origin in the remotest antiquity, 'the earliest epoch of the world'. After this, it is no surprise to learn that the Tarot was known to the Pythagoreans and that Solomon represented it on thirty-six talismans, which are described, and their use explained, in the *Sefer Yetzira*, the source of whose traditional dogma is the Patriarch Abraham.[57] Evidently St John was a latecomer to the business. The centuries blend and blur in the writing of Éliphas Lévi: indeed, everything blends and blurs – it is often difficult to tell whether it is the Tarot he is speaking about or something different.

A sober appraisal of Lévi's works on magic could characterise them only as the product of an advanced state of intellectual deliquescence. Nevertheless, for the reason I have suggested or for some other, he initiated a boom in occultist writing, and almost all his successors acknowledged their debt to him, and may be said to have belonged to his school. The earliest of these was an almost exact contemporary of his, Jean-Baptiste Pitois (1811-1877), who wrote principally under the name of Paul Christian, but also published a work on *Les Héros du Christianisme* in eight volumes, which appeared between 1853 and 1858, under the name of Dom Marie-Bernard; Marie-Bernard had been his name in religion while a novice at a Trappist monastery, but he had not taken his final vows.[58] He lived the life of a journalist and literary man, serving, at different times, as editor of the *Moniteur du Soir* and of the *Moniteur Catholique*, employing a great range of pseudonyms[59] and achieving a prolific output of books on a variety of subjects: among his many works were a history of the Cistercian Order, a translation of Ossian, a volume on walks in historic Paris and some Catholic devotional writings.

By his own account, Pitois's interest in the occult was first aroused in the late 1830s, when he was acting as librarian at the Ministry of Public Instruction, by his friend and fellow-librarian Charles Nodier. His principal occult interest was, and remained, astrology. He met Éliphas Lévi in about 1852; he was for a time a neighbour of his, and took lessons from him on the Cabala and the Tarot. In 1863, under the name Paul Christian, he published the first of his two main occultist works, an extraordinary book called *L'Homme rouge des Tuileries*. This is concerned with astrology, viewed very explicitly as a means of foretelling the future. In a passage of the Preface referring to the year 1854, Christian declares, 'two men alone, in Paris, could read the future like an open book. For these two men, there was no invisible world. The invisible exists only in proportion to the sensitivity of our organs. The first of these men, taciturn as an eagle in his eyrie, contemplated, in the light of his genius, the plans dictated by his mission of glory. The second, a solitary Magùs, grown old in the study of the infinite, meditated on the algebra of the heavens'.[60] Christopher McIntosh, commenting on this passage, takes the taciturn eagle to be Christian himself, and the solitary Magus to be

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[54] *Transcendental Magic*, p. 18.

[55] The Ace and 2 of Cups are shown on plate XV, opposite p. 314, in E. Lévi, *Histoire de la magie*, Paris, 1860, or on plate XVI, opposite p. 298, in E. Lévi, *History of Magic*, trans. A.E. Waite, London, 1913. The '21st key of the primitive Egyptian Tarot', representing Isis enthroned, is shown as plate V of the original edition, opposite p. 77, and on plate VII, opposite p. 64, in Waite's translation. The same figure is shown on p. 161 of Papus's *Le Tarot divinatoire*, Paris, 1909, and, on p. 162, a similar drawing by Lévi illustrating triumph 5, normally the Pope, showing a standing figure of Horus; the only strikingly non-Egyptian feature is the Hebrew Letter He. These last two are reproduced in Kaplan, p. 162.

[56] *Transcendental Magic*, pp. 43, 95, 149, 375, 396.

[57] *The Key to the Mysteries*, pp. 10-11.

[58] For biographical material concerning Pitois, see McIntosh, op. cit., pp. 128-30, and 'Paul Christian: A Memoir', by Ross Nichols, in Paul Christian, *The History and Practice of Magic*, ed. Ross Nichols, vol. I, London, 1952, pp. ix-xiv.

[59] According to Mr McIntosh, these included 'Hortensius Flamel', 'Une Sibylle', 'Frédéric de La Grange' and 'Lusidès'; according to Mr Nichols, he also used the name 'Charles Moreau'. How far they are right, I do not know. A.E. Waite attributed two works by 'Hortensius Flamel', *Le Livre rouge* of 1841 and *Le Livre d'or* of 1842, to Éliphas Lévi (*Transcendental Magic*, p. xxii, fn. 1); a work called *Le grand livre de destin*, by Frédéric de la Grange, was published in Paris in 1845.

[60] Paul Christian, *L'Homme rouge des Tuileries*, Paris, 1863, p. 6. An undated photographic reprint was issued in Paris, in 1937. See also C. McIntosh, op. cit., p. 130.

Éliphas Lévi. The continuation of the passage makes plain, however, that it is the solitary Magus who is Christian, for it goes on to tell how this Magus had, on 3 April 1854, relieved the anxiety felt at the Imperial court about an heir to the throne by communicating to the Empress Eugénie the future birth to her of a son; when the predicted event took place, on 16 March 1856, the Empress's confidence in and respect for the astrologer became unbounded. This puts the identification beyond doubt, since Paul Christian had, under that name, brought out in February 1856 a pamphlet called *Carmen Sibyllinum* and subtitled 'prédiction de la naissance du fils de Napoléon III, par les Arcanes du Magisme égyptien, consultés le 3 avril 1854'. As for the taciturn eagle, it would seem extravagant praise for even the most devoted admirer of Éliphas Lévi to speak of his 'mission of glory'; it is surely Napoleon III to whom Christian is here ascribing an ability to read the future like an open book, a claim which, in view of the disasters in store for him, we may doubt. Even so, Christian's book does testify that, at that time, he held Lévi in high regard, since the Preface is headed by an extensive quotation from the *Dogme de la haute magie*. Mr Ross Nichols reports, however, that an unpublished manuscript of Christian's shows that by 1871 he had come to conceive a dislike for Lévi.

The title of *L'Homme rouge* alludes to the legend of the little red man who haunted the Tuileries and advised Napoleon Bonaparte; the book takes the form of a narrative concerning an aged Benedictine monk, Dom Bonaventure Guyon, who is a devotee of the occult, who converses with Napoleon and whose red cloak gives rise to the legend. Guyon owns a manuscript containing occult lore, and about half the book is occupied by the text of his manuscript, in which is expounded Christian's idiosyncratic system of astrology, which is interwoven with much numerology, some Cabalistic ideas, the Hermetic doctrine of the thirty-six decans and, above all, with the Tarot. Christian's ideas about the Tarot pack were to exert almost as much influence on later Tarot occultism as those of Éliphas Lévi; but his peculiarity, among occultist writers who treated of the subject, is that he scarcely ever mentioned it by name. The supposed manuscript of Maître Guyon opens with an account of the symbol of the Rosy Cross, stated to have been known to ancient magi and to have been devised by 'Hermes-Thoth', that is, once again, Hermes Trismegistus. This consists of a circle and a cross formed by vertical and horizontal lines through its centre and projecting just beyond it at both ends, together with the two diameters bisecting the right angles of the cross, a concentric circle of half the diameter, eight other circles of the same size as the smaller one with centres at the mid-points of the eight radii shown of the large circle, the nine small circles being numbered from 1 to 9, and, round the large circle at the ends of the two oblique diameters, the letters INRI. The manuscript explains that the ancient magi inscribed these letters around this very geometrical rose because each contains a mystery of the divine name: the first, Jamin or I, symbolises the active principle of creation or generation; the second, Nain or N, the passive such principle; the third, Iron or R, symbolises the eternal transformation of the forms of life; and the fourth, being the same as the first, has the same symbolic meaning as it; their circular arrangement represents the perpetual motion which creates the infinitude of possible beings. Éliphas Lévi, too, while assigning much arbitrary symbolism to the four letters of the Tetragrammaton (the name of God as written in the Hebrew of the Old Testament), had invested the sequence INRI (normally taken as the initials of the Latin superscription on the Cross of Christ) with a primordial and cosmic significance. It is a noteworthy feature of Paul Christian's occult writings that, unlike virtually every other of his colleagues, he never once refers to letters of the Hebrew alphabet. After the disquisition on the letters INRI, the manuscript states that 'the same idea is represented by the numbers of the four terms of the creation of all things': 1 represents the creative spirit, 2 represents matter, 3 represents the union of matter and spirit, and 4 the created form. The summation of these numbers produces 'the symbolic decad: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10.'

The ten circles of the Rosy Cross – the nine smaller circles and the large one – are then discussed individually, and, when we come to the large one, the tenth or outer circle of the Rosy Cross, the Tarot makes its first appearance, but not under that name, nor as playing cards or anything resembling them. The outer circle is, we are told, divided into seventy-eight symbolic houses (*loges*), of which the 'keys' are then given in detail. These are numbered from I to

LXXVII, with 0 standing between XX and XXI: 0 of course corresponds to the Fool, and I to XXI to the triumph cards, while XXII to LXXVII correspond to the suit cards. The suits are arranged in the order Batons, which Christian calls Sceptres (*Sceptres*), Cups, Swords, which he calls Blades (*Glaives*), and Coins, to which he gives the name Shekels (*Sicles*); within each suit, the court figures come first, beginning with the King, followed by the numerals from Ace to 10. Instead of the usual names for the court figures, Christian uses 'Master' (*Maître*), 'Mistress' (*Maîtresse*), 'Warrior' (*Combattant*) and 'Slave' (*Esclave*). The names given to the triumphs are very far from being the standard ones, and, with a few variations, are always used by Christian in his writings. With the principal variants used by him in brackets, they are: I – the Magus; II – the Gate of the Sanctuary (of the occult Sanctuary); III – Isis-Urania; IV – the Cubic Stone; V – the Master of the Mysteries (of the Arcana); VI – the Two Roads; VII – the Chariot of Osiris; VIII – Themis (the Scales and Blade); IX – the Veiled Lamp; X – the Sphinx; XI – the Muzzled Lion (the Tamed Lion); XII – the Sacrifice; XIII – the Skeleton Reaper (the Reaper, the Scythe); XIV – the Two Urns (the Genius of the Sun); XV – Typhon; XVI – the Beheaded Tower (the Lightning-Struck Tower); XVII – the Star of the Magi; XVIII – the Twilight; XIX – the Blazing Light; XX – the Awakening of the Dead (the Genius of the Dead); 0 – the Crocodile; and XXI – the Crown of the Magi. Many of these will be recognised as based on the familiar iconography of the card as in the Tarot de Marseille; others, such as VI, X, XVII and XXI, as reflecting ideas of de Gébelin, Etteilla or Éliphas Lévi; a few derive from notions peculiar to Christian. For each card, there is given a fanciful description of its appearance, that is, of the 'hieroglyph' associated with that symbolic house: for instance, I is represented by a Magus holding a sceptre, and standing in front of a cubic stone on which are a blade, a cup and a shekel (this idea that the Bagatto shows the four suit-signs was taken from Lévi, and copied by every occultist thereafter), while 0 shows a man walking unawares towards a lurking crocodile. To each of the seventy-eight houses is associated a number, distinct from its sequential number, a letter from the 22-letter 'Egyptian hieratic alphabet' and a threefold significance, one in the Divine World, another in the Intellectual World and a third in the Physical World. Thus to triumph I is assigned the number 1 and the hieratic letter Athoim; in the Divine World, it signifies absolute Being, in the Intellectual World unity and in the Physical World man.

At this stage, astrological topics proper are introduced and treated at length; in the course of this, each planet is assigned a circle, divided into seventy-eight parts, which are listed and with each of which is associated by name one of the seventy-eight Tarot 'arcana'. In all this time, and throughout the supposed manuscript of Guyon, the word 'Tarot' is not used and nothing is said to give anyone quite unaware of the Tarot pack the least idea that such a thing as a pack of playing cards is involved. After the text of the manuscript is concluded, the narrative is resumed, and, in the course of it, we are instructed in a practical method of casting horoscopes to make specific predictions, based on the theory expounded in the manuscript, as well as a means of making predictions by purely numerological methods; in both, as in the astrological theory, the symbolic meanings ascribed to the Tarot cards play a crucial role. We also learn, however, of the book engraved by Hermes-Thoth on seventy-eight leaves of gold (*lames d'or*), arranged in a great circle and in the possession of the priests of Memphis; each had written on it a number and a letter, together with symbolic figures and signs of the zodiac, the planets, the thirty-six decans and the 360 genii, the significance of each constituting an Arcanum or secret.[61] These seventy-eight *lames* constitute the supreme instrument of all divination. Later, Dom Guyon takes from his pocket a box containing 'a poor little copy of the seventy-eight *lames* of the Book of Hermes': this magic breviary, he says, is known by the Rabbis as the Samaritan Tarot or Oracle, because it was invented in Samaria after the fall of Jerusalem by some Jewish priests who escaped the Babylonian captivity.[62] This is the first time the word 'Tarot' has occurred in the book (it is used once more); we are told that the types of the four sacred objects which form the suit-signs were kept in the Ark together with the Tables of the Law, and that they have mysterious senses, Sceptres representing the active, and Cups the passive, generative principle, Swords the union (*copulation*) of the two principles and Shekels generation accomplished in all the orders of life. The book has an Epilogue, in which Christian himself figures: almost at the end of this, we are given the basic meanings of the '22 first Arcana of the 10th circle of the Rosy Cross'. These are as follows (with emendations made by Christian in a later work in brackets): I – Will; II – Knowledge; III – Action; IV – Realisation; V – Inspiration (Occult Inspiration); VI – Ordeal; VII – Victory; VIII – Equilibrium; IX – Wisdom (Prudence); X – Fortune; XI – Strength; XII – Sacrifice (Violent Death); XIII – Transformation; XIV – Initiative; XV – Fate; XVI – Ruin; XVII – Hope; XVIII – Deception; XIX – Happiness (Earthly Happiness); XX – Renewal; 0 – Expiation; and XXI – Reward.

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[61] *L'Homme rouge*, pp. 299, 300, 315.

[62] Ibid., p. 390; see also p. 442.

How much of all this Christian expected his readers to believe, it is difficult to say; *L'Homme rouge des Tuileries* was, after all, written in a form presumably intended to be taken as fictional. In any case, the book does not seem to have had much of a success, although after Christian's death, when copies had become difficult to find, it acquired a great reputation; perhaps it was too odd a piece of work to make an immediate impression. In 1870, however, Christian published a rival to Lévi's *Histoire*, entitled *Histoire de la magie, du monde surnaturel et de la fatalité à travers les temps et les peuples*, which rapidly became required reading among occultists; an English translation was issued in 1952.[63] Almost all the material concerning the Tarot from *L'Homme rouge* is reproduced in the *Histoire de la magie*, but, this time, the word 'Tarot' does not occur a single time in the entire book, nor is there any mention of a pack of cards or even of a book, whether of leaves of gold or otherwise.[64] The volume is divided into seven books, of which books VI and VII are not historical at all, but contain an exposition of Christian's heterodox system of astrology, very much the same as in *L'Homme rouge*: again, there is associated with each planet a 'circle of fate' (*cercle fatidique*), each one containing 78 arcana, which are associated with the cards of the Tarot pack, for which Christian uses his deviant nomenclature. The first five books contain a rambling and erratic quasi-historical account of various branches of magic, interspersed with lengthy anecdotal material. The anecdotes appear often to be devoid of all foundation; for instance, to a diatribe against Freemasonry is appended a long story about Cagliostro in Paris, complete with dialogue, involving, among others, Court de Gébelin, which has no warrant whatever, but is inserted in order to recommend a fantastic anagrammatic technique of divination: but, since the book purports to be a serious historical work, Christian presumably meant his readers to understand him literally. Since the Tarot symbols which are used in the astrological section are not admitted to derive from playing cards, they have to be represented as coming from somewhere; they are introduced in book II, not, this time, in connection with the Rosy Cross, but in a different way. 'Iamblichus, who lived in the first half of the fourth century A.D.,' Christian states, 'has left us a treatise on the Egyptian mysteries, in which are related the principal scenes of the initiation tests'; and in a footnote he gives the title of Iamblichus's *On the Mysteries* in both Latin and Greek, with a reference to a particular edition.[65] There follows an extended description of this ancient Egyptian initiation ceremony, occupying thirty-four pages in the English translation, and all, apparently, based upon an account contained in Iamblichus's book. The ceremony is conducted within one of the Pyramids, and, in the course of it, the postulant is led up a stairway of 78 steps, and then through a hall on either side of which are twelve statues, and, between each pair of statues, a painting. These twenty-two paintings, he is told, are Arcana or symbolic hieroglyphs; the Science of Will, the principle of all wisdom and source of all power, is contained in them. Each corresponds to a 'letter of the sacred language' and to a number, and each expresses a reality of the divine world, a reality of the intellectual world and a reality of the physical world. The secret meanings of these twenty-two Arcana are then expounded to him, and Christian, still apparently quoting from Iamblichus, proceeds to list these twenty-two symbolic paintings, with their names, their numbers, their associated letters, their threefold significations and a description of the appearance of each one. This list in fact coincides, with minor variations, with the first twenty-two items on the list of the seventy-eight keys of the houses of the tenth circle given in *L'Homme rouge*. The names of the letters of the sacred alphabet have in some cases been altered from those of the 'hieratic letters' in the earlier book, and the alphabet itself is illustrated on a later page as 'the alphabet of the Magi';[66] Christian of course knew nothing of Egyptian hieratic script, and the alphabet is merely a magic or cypher alphabet,[67] more or less corresponding to the Hebrew alphabet.

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[63] Paul Christian, *The History and Practice of Magic*, two volumes, edited by Ross Nichols, translated by James Kirkup and Julian Shaw, London, 1952.

[64] The mention of the Tarot on p. 464 of vol. II of *The History and Practice of Magic* is an interpolation by the translators; see p. 495 of the original.

[65] P. Christian, *Histoire de la magie*, p. 106, *History and Practice of Magic*, vol. I, p. 89. For some reason, Christian refers to an edition published in Oxford in 1678.

This passage is a bolder example than anything to be found in Éliphas Lévi of the most insidious of the techniques of occultist writing, that of the false ascription. Anyone who has already firmly made up his mind that everything written by the occultists concerning the Tarot pack is ignorant rubbish will, of course, conclude that Iamblichus gave no such description, and he will be perfectly right: not only does Iamblichus's treatise contain no word of any such paintings, but it includes no account of any initiation ceremony; Christian's description owes much to the famous eighteenth-century romance by Jean Terrasson, *Sethos* (1731), but nothing at all to Iamblichus. But consider, for a moment, the state of mind of a reader who is inclined to disbelieve the occultist theory of the antiquity of the Tarot pack and of its esoteric meaning, but whose mind is not quite closed on the subject; one who, moreover, is in no position to check for himself the authenticity of Christian's purported paraphrase from the neo-Platonist writer. Such a reader, who would hardly suppose that something for which a precise reference was given and which went on for thirty-odd pages could be a mere invention, would undoubtedly be impressed; the impact would be all the greater for Christian's apparent unawareness of its implications, his ignorance, so far as can be told from this book, that there is such a thing as the Tarot pack. If Iamblichus really described such a ceremony, then, whether it ever took place or not, at least the symbolism of the Tarot triumphs, that particular selection of twenty-two subjects, must be at least a millenium older than the oldest Tarot cards are alleged to be by opponents of the occultist theories. A reader in this position would have been very effectively softened up; he would now be disposed to accept a great deal of the other nonsense about the Tarot pack to be found in occultist writings. It may perhaps be pleaded that Christian did not want to be understood as meaning literally what he said: but, if so, why the mention of Iamblichus at all, and why the exact reference in the erudite footnote? The answer is, I think, that the learned are supposed to take as parable what the unlearned are intended to construe literally.

Occultists of the grand sort never like to be reminded that, in speaking of the Tarot, they are talking about a pack of cards, and so they like to find other ways of referring to them, as leaves of a book or as keys. Christian's word 'Arcana' (*Arcanes*) henceforward became standard occultist terminology for the Tarot cards, supplemented often in France by the word *lames* (metal plates) found in *L'Homme rouge* though not in the *Histoire de la magie*. His names for the suits and the court cards were not accepted, and his special names for the triumphs were adopted only by a few; but his interpretations of the cards, which greatly elaborated on Lévi's, were widely copied.

In the 1870s there was something of a lull in occultist activity of the Éliphas Lévi brand: a great resurgence of it took place in the late 1880s and the 1890s, and most of Lévi's other followers knew him only from his books, having been children when he died. One of these was Eugène Jacob, whose wife was a professional cartomancer, and who, according to Mr Ellic Howe, made his living by the sale of magical amulets and by a dubious medical practice, and served a short term in prison for fraud in 1914.[68] In 1888, under the pseudonym Ély Star, he published a book on astrology called *Mystères de l'horoscope*. This was a profoundly unoriginal work, borrowed almost entirely from the astrological writing of Paul Christian; even the title of the book was lifted from that of a section of *L'Homme rouge des Tuileries*. The only point on which Ély Star diverges from Christian is in lacking his coyness about referring to the Tarot by name or as a pack of cards: in introducing the 'circles of fate' for the various planets, with their

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[66] *Histoire de la magie*, p. 177, *History and Practice of Magic*, vol. I, p. 147.

[67] Like those given in book V of Trithemius's *Polygraphia*, for example.

[68] Ellic Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, London, 1972, p. 295.

Tarot attributions, he says that these circles, which 'go back to the remotest antiquity', are simply an appropriation of the 'Hermetic Tarot' which Éliphas Lévi, 'the modern Hierophant', called 'the Bible of Mankind'.[69] Otherwise, virtually the only novelty seems to be the use of the terms 'major arcana' for the triumphs, with the Fool, and 'minor arcana' for the suit cards; this was standard occultist terminology from this time on, and was probably already established when the book was written. A fifty-page section of the book is devoted to the Tarot, under that name: Star uses Christian's names for the suits, the court cards and the triumphs, and gives precisely the same descriptions of them, with their associated numbers and letters, and triple significations, as does Christian. His only divergence lies in the sequential numbering: instead of numbering the Crocodile (i.e. the Fool) 0, and placing it between XX and XXI, he numbers it XXII, and increases the numbers of the suit cards by one each accordingly,, to end with LXXVIII. He remarks that there is no comparison possible between 'this Hermetic marvel', as so described, and 'the so-called "tarots" devised by Etteilla, which are still used to-day for fortune-telling.'[70] He ends by tabulating the names of the 'major arcana' in the 'Hermetic Tarot', i.e. Christian's names for them, alongside those of what he calls the 'Tarot de Besançon'. For the latter he gives mostly the standard names from the Tarot de Marseille (it cannot have been a Tarot de Besançon that he was using, since a distinguishing feature of that pattern is its replacement of the Pope and Popess by Jupiter and Juno); but some occultist nomenclature creeps in, as in the names 'the *Kether* or Crown' for the XXI, 'the Sacrifice' for XII, 'the Triumphant Man' for VII and 'Man between Vice and Virtue' for VI.

A more picturesque, and more considerable, character was the Marquis Stanislas de Guaita (1861-1897). In his short life, he was the focus of a number of quarrels between different occultist factions, and was the subject of a good deal of newspaper sensationalism; the journalists called him the *ténébreux marquis*.[71] His principal importance in the history of modern occultism lies in his having reintroduced the practice of organising devotees of the occult into secret Orders, divided into successive grades. In 1888, he founded a Rosicrucian brotherhood, called the Cabalistic Order of the Rosy Cross; among its founder members were 'Dr Papus' and 'François-Charles Barlet', both of whom we shall encounter later, and the latter of whom was a considerably older man than the others, and Joséphin Péladan (1858-1918), who from that year onwards began to call himself Sar Péladan ('Sar' allegedly meaning 'King' in Assyrian).[72] Péladan wrote a series of novels called *La Décadence latine*, in which he himself figures as Sar Mérodack, a magician who has read 'all carnal literature from Martial to de Sade'; but, in spite of his occultism and his decadence, he maintained a firm adherence to the Catholic Church, and in 1890 formed a breakaway order called the Order of the Catholic Rosy Cross, the Temple and the Grail. He was formally declared a 'schismatic and apostate Rosicrucian' by de Guaita, Papus and Barlet in 1893: as well he might be, the original Rosicrucian movement having been vehemently anti-Catholic; but then, although de Guaita himself was firmly opposed to Catholicism, his Rosicrucian Order was no more authentic than Péladan's. The Rosicrucian emblem often illustrated in books on the occult, consisting of a cross with the letters of the Tetragrammaton, a pentagram with the Hebrew letters for the name of Jesus, and four objects which look more like cabbages than roses, was of de Guaita's design.

De Guaita's main contribution to Tarot occultism was to sponsor the production of a newly designed set of Tarot cards. In his *Rituel de la haute magie*, Éliphas Lévi had written, 'An important work still remains to be done – the publication of a really complete and well-executed exemplar' of the Tarot pack, and had added, 'We shall perhaps undertake the task.'[73] In 1861 he had discussed this plan of designing and publishing a Tarot pack in accordance with his own conceptions with a visitor from London, Kenneth Mackenzie; but he never carried it out. In the spring of 1887, de Guaita met Oswald

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[69] Ély Star, *Les Mystères de l'horoscope*, Paris, 1888, p. 115.

[70] Ibid., p. 282.

[71] For biographical material concerning de Guaita, see McIntosh, op. cit., pp. 164-77, 181-4, 193-4; Oswald Wirth, *Stanislas de Guaita: souvenirs de son sécrétaire*, Paris, 1935; and the same author's Preface to his *Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge*, Paris, 1927.

[72] See R.H. Wilenski, *Modern French Painters*, New York, 1939, p. 95; also Edward Lucie-Smith, *Symbolist Art*, London, 1972, pp. 109-12.

[73] *Transcendental Magic*, p. 397.

Wirth (1860-1943), a Swiss who began his career as a practitioner of hypnosis, and de Guaita introduced his new friend to occultism; although slightly the younger, de Guaita was obviously the dominant character of the two, and Wirth continued all his life to regard himself as his disciple. De Guaita, in turn, revered Éliphas Lévi, and, on learning, on his very first meeting with Oswald Wirth, that Wirth was an amateur artist, suggested to him that he should fulfil Lévi's unrealised intention of 'restoring the twenty-two Arcana of the Tarot to their hieroglyphic purity'. Wirth accepted the charge; having no previous knowledge of the Tarot, he was guided entirely by de Guaita's instructions. In this way, he designed a cartomantic set, consisting only of the twenty-two 'major Arcana', which was published in 1889, limited to 350 copies, under the name *Les 22 Arcanes du Tarot kabbalistique*. Paul Christian had written as if describing cards widely different from the Tarot de Marseille: but Wirth's was in fact the very first cartomantic Tarot pack other than those deriving from Etteilla;[74] more exactly, it was the first neo-occultist pack. Each card bears its Arabic numeral, from 0 to 21, its name, as in the Tarot de Marseille, and its Hebrew letter, in accordance with the correspondence stated by Lévi. The designs of the Tarot de Marseille are followed moderately closely, but with numerous alterations to accommodate occultist ideas: thus the four suit-signs are shown on the I (*Bateleur*), Christian's crocodile makes an unobtrusive appearance on the Fool, the Chariot (VII) is drawn by Lévi's sphinxes, the Devil (XV) has a goat's head, a pair of serpents are entwined round the base of the Wheel of Fortune (X), and so on. The cards, though competently drawn, are subtly repellent. After these cards were published, Wirth undertook, with de Guaita's approval, to design an improved version of them; in the event, however, this was not published until 1927, thirty years after de Guaita's death. This later set was reprinted in 1966, and a full pack using Wirth's designs for the 'major Arcana' is currently obtainable. In the same year, 1889, as that in which his first set was published, and despite the fact that his mentor, de Guaita, disbelieved in astrology, Wirth contributed an 'Essay on the Astronomical Tarot' to Papus's book *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*. In this, he supplies a diagram to illustrate the disposition of the Tarot symbols in the initiation ceremony described by Paul Christan, and observes that 'the Tarot ... is pre-eminently the Sacred Book of occult initiation'. He remarks that 'the major Arcana of the Tarot are disfigured reproductions of a primitive model dating from the earliest times'; but, to judge from his own restitution of them to their hieroglyphic purity, the disfigurement has been remarkably slight, considering the vast lapse of time involved. The essay concludes by associating each of the 'major Arcana' with constellations, both those of the Zodiac and those outside it.

De Guaita began a series of books entitled collectively *Essais de sciences maudites*. The first in the series, *Au Seuil du mystère*, appeared in 1886, an enlarged edition following in 1890. This was primarily a survey of contemporary occultism, with some historical material. The Tarot is mentioned only in passing; de Guaita calls it 'that admirable initiatory book, long prostituted to the vilest uses',[75] but whether these vile uses consisted of playing games or of telling fortunes with the cards I am not sure. The next book in the series, announced in 1888, was to be *Le Serpent de la Genèse*, a study of evil in many aspects and manifestations, including diabolism; but, as de Guaita worked on it, it grew and grew, until he decided to divide it into three volumes. Each was to correspond with one of the three septenaries of the Tarot arcana, and to be divided into seven chapters, one for each card in the septenary. The first volume of the *Serpent de la Genèse* (constituting the second of the *Essais de sciences maudites*) came out in 1891, under the title *Le Temple de Satan*. The chapters correspond to triumphs I to VII: although each chapter is headed by a Hebrew letter and the name of the card, in the Tarot de Marseille form, together with a list of its significations (or analogical *rapports*), as understood by de Guaita, there is very little about either the Tarot generally or the individual cards. At the beginning there is a plan of the whole work, in which the Tarot pack is spoken of as the book of Thoth and the significations of all the twenty-two arcana are listed; in the body of the book, three pages are devoted to the Tarot as a whole, but nothing original is said.

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[74] With the possible exception of one called *jeu de la princesse Tarot*, issued by the playing-card firm of Wattilliaux, spelled Wattilaux by Papus, who mentions the pack in *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*; I have been unable to discover anything further about it. The Italian pack mentioned in footnote 134 is to be considered as in the Etteilla tradition.

[75] Stanislas de Guaita, *Essais de science maudites*, I: *Au seuil du mystère*, second edition, Paris, 1890, p. 91.

The chief interest of *Le Temple de Satan* lies in the bitter attack, extending over eighty pages and contained in chapter VI, on the sect founded by Pierre Vintras. This was a heretical movement with strong magical ingredients and also, in its earlier stages, political ones as well (it supported the claim of the Bourbon pretender Naundorff to the throne of France). Vintras's speciality was consecrated Hosts which miraculously bled. When Vintras died in 1875, the succession as head of the sect was claimed by the abbé Boullan, an apostate Catholic priest who also called himself Dr Johannès. Boullan's claim was recognised by many, though not by all, members of the sect; he professed to be the reincarnation of St John the Baptist, and conducted various magico-religious rites such as the Sacrifice of Glory of Melchisedech and the Provictimal Sacrifice of Mary. He was also widely believed to engage in quasi-mystical ceremonies involving sexual intercourse, as indeed Vintras himself had been accused of doing. When de Guaita and Oswald Wirth first met in 1887, they discovered that, during the preceding year, though yet unknown to each other, each had been initiated into the sect and had attended its ceremonies, Wirth at least with the deliberate intention of gathering evidence against it. Together, they launched a campaign against Boullan and his followers: de Guaita's denunciation in *Le Temple de Satan* was the continuation of that campaign. Boullan found a defender, however, in the novelist J.K. Huysmans, who in 1884 had published the decadent novel *À Rebours* and in 1891 brought out the occultist novel *Là-Bas*, in which Boullan figures sympathetically as the white magician Dr Johannès. When Boullan died in 1893, Huysmans accused de Guaita in print of murdering Boullan by means of magical spells. De Guaita thereupon challenged Huysmans to a duel; but Huysmans retracted before it was due to be fought.

The second volume of *Le Serpent de la Genèse* (being the third of the *Essais*), entitled *La Clef de la magie noire*, appeared in 1897. Its seven chapters correspond to triumphs VIII to XIV; there is rather more direct discussion of the symbolism and occult significance of the individual cards than in the preceding volume, but it still does not amount to very much. The third volume was to have been called *Le Problème du mal*: it was again to have had seven chapters, corresponding to triumphs XV to XX and 0 (the Fool), with an epilogue corresponding to triumph XXI. But de Guaita did not live to bring it out, for, in the year that *La Clef de la magie noire* was published, he died, at the age of thirty-six, of an overdose of drugs. The story got about that his last words were, 'I die a victim of my work', on which a sinister interpretation was placed; but, according to Oswald Wirth, they were, 'I see! I see!'. De Guaita's books were not widely read, his individual interpretations of the Tarot cards exerted little influence, and he seems not to have had much of a general theory of the Tarot of his own to offer: his importance lies, first, in his part in the production of Wirth's Tarot cards, the first of a long line of cartomantic and occultist Tarots, and, secondly, in his foundation of the Cabalistic Order of the Rosy Cross.

The latter was, indeed, very important. The formation of secret societies and esoteric orders, whose members were initiated successively into higher and higher grades, was a new turn that the occultist movement was taking. More exactly, it was a reversion to the style of occultism that had flourished in Germany and above all in France during the second half of the eighteenth century, which had seen a proliferation of such groups, many under the general banner of Freemasonry and many strongly influenced by Rosicrucian ideas. In the nineteenth century, these had either degenerated into disreputable cults like those of Vintras and Boullan or faded out altogether; for Lévi, the magical tradition was to be extracted from books, including the hieroglyphic book of the Tarot, rather than from the teachings of secret orders. De Guaita should not be credited with inaugurating the new fashion, the inspiration for which seems to have come from England. The Theosophical Society had been founded in New York in 1875 by Mme Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), and was imported into France from Britain, the Isis lodge being established in Paris before 1884; despite the rather different, though overlapping, set of ideas which it propagated, it attracted adherents from among several of the French occultists. The Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia had been founded as early as 1866, and its much more influential successor, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, came into existence in the same year, 1888, as de Guaita's Cabalistic Order of the Rosy Cross. It seems, however, to have been de Guaita's foundation of his Rosicrucian Order which revitalised the old tradition of occultist societies in France. As a result of the growth of the secret Orders, the idea of initiation assumed a critical importance among occultists; a journal whose very name was *L'Initiation* was founded in 1888, with a large editorial board including de Guaita, Péladan, Ély Star, Papus and François-Charles Barlet. With all this, an additional new role had to be assigned to the Tarot: its sequence of 'major Arcana' had to be interpreted as representing the spiritual progress of the initiate from neophyte to adept. This task was accomplished by Barlet (1838-1921), who was in 1897 to succeed de Guaita as head of the Cabalistic Order of the Rosy Cross, and whom we have already met as taking part in the excommunication of Péladan. He was, at the same time, a member of the Theosophical Society, and had written a book called *L'Initiation*; in everyday life, he was a civil servant, and his real name was Alfred Faucheux. In 1889, he wrote an essay called 'Le Tarot initiatique', giving the required interpretation of the Tarot triumphs; a considerable part of this essay was reprinted in Papus's book *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* of the same year, together with another essay by Barlet on 'The divine name in the Tarot', which is concerned to associate the letters of the Tetragrammaton with the different triumph cards, and becomes even wilder and more fantastic as it proceeds.

It was, however, on Dr Gérard Encausse (1865-1916) that the mantle of Éliphas Lévi fell. Encausse was a qualified medical doctor who published some medical treatises and an enormous number of books on almost every aspect of occultism; he served in the medical corps in the First World War, and died of tuberculosis.[76] In his occultist writings, and in all occult affairs, he styled himself 'Dr Papus'. The name 'Papus', signifying 'physician', was given by Lévi as that of one of the 'genii of the first hour' in a Supplement to his *Rituel de la haute magie* forming a commentary on the *Nuctemeron* of Apollonius of Tyana,[77] so that, in this, Encausse was playing Hugand to Lévi's Etteilla. He attached great importance to secret societies, regarding them as the principal vehicle, and one of greater importance than occult literature, by which the esoteric wisdom of the ancients had been transmitted through the ages. Naturally, he had an insatiable appetite for joining such societies: in 1887, he was admitted as a member of the Theosophical Society; in 1888 he became a founder member of the Cabalistic Order of the Rosy Cross, in which he obtained the influential position of Delegate General, and, as such, later took part in the excommunication of Péladan; and, in 1891, he was elected Grand Master for life of the Martinist Order, a group which claimed to go back to Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803).

Éliphas Lévi, Paul Christian and Ély Star had expatiated on the mysterious wisdom hidden in the Tarot and on its perfection as an instrument of divination: but, as yet, the neo-occultists had no clear account of what that wisdom was, or how, exactly, the cards could be used to reveal secrets of the future or of the cosmos; for all their verbiage, and for all their sneers at Etteilla, they had no systematic theory of the Tarot comparable to his. Papus set out to remedy this defect by publishing the first complete book, other than Etteilla's productions, devoted exclusively to Tarot occultism, his *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, which came out in 1889.[78] The book is illustrated by cards from the Tarot de Marseille and from Oswald Wirth's first set, which had been published in the same year. The terms 'major Arcana' and 'minor Arcana' are used, and the cards generally are referred to as *lames*; but the traditional names of the suits, of the court cards and of the triumphs are employed. Papus accepts the Tarot pack as being of ancient Egyptian origin, and says that it is 'the Bible of Bibles'. 'It is,' he continues, 'the book of Thoth Hermes Trismegistus, it is the book of Adam, it is the book of the primitive Revelation of the ancient civilisations'; in tracing it back to Adam, he surely made a bid that cannot be surpassed. *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* is divided into three Parts, of which the first two give the substance of Papus's interpretation of the Tarot, and the third deals with subsidiary matters. The principal instrument used by Papus for interpreting the Tarot was a doctrine of the cosmic wheel, previously expounded in his *Traité élémentaire de science occulte* of 1888, and in part derived from Éliphas Lévi, particularly from his discussion of the diagram he falsely attributed to Guillaume Postel, and, in part also, from Paul Christian. This doctrine is first expounded numerologically, then applied to the Divine Name (the Tetragrammaton), and finally, with tortuous complexity, to the Tarot. The Cross is considered as forming the spokes of a wheel, as by Lévi and, supposedly, by Postel: numerically regarded, the first four numbers are associated with the arms of the Cross, thus:

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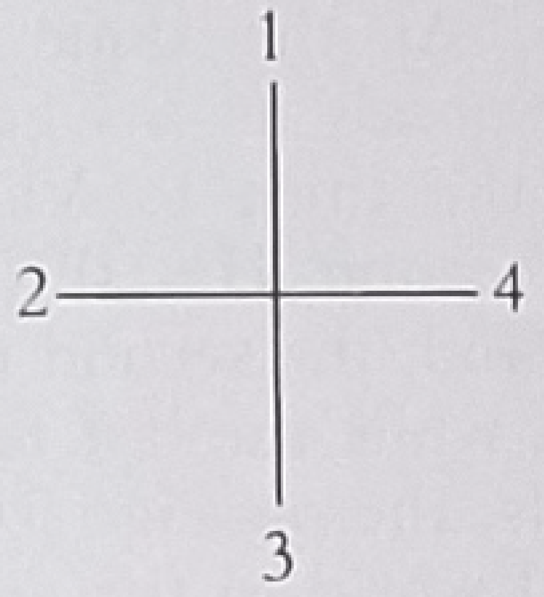
[76] For biographical material concerning Encausse, see McIntosh, op. cit., pp. 157-63, and Philippe Encausse, *Papus, Dr Gérard Encausse, sa vie, son oeuvre*, Paris, 1932.

[77] *Transcendental Magic*, p. 417.

[78] The first edition of *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* was subtitled *Le plus ancien livre du monde*. A second edition, subtitled *Clef absolue de la science occulte*, was issued in 1910, and a third edition in 1926.



Now, Papus says, there are two operations which enable one to find the esoteric value of a number, and thereby understand the secrets of antiquity. The first is 'theosophic reduction', which consists in finding the remainder when the number is divided by 9, which, as every schoolboy knows, can be accomplished by repeatedly adding the digits of the Arabic numeral. The second is 'theosophic addition', which consists, for any number n, of finding the sum of the whole numbers from 1 to n; according to the well-known formula, not given by Papus, this is $\frac{1}{2}n(n+1)$ By using these two operations, Papus observes, we find that 4, 7, 10, … may all be equated with 1. That is to say, where we write n° for the sum of the first n positive integers, $4^\circ = 10$, and 10 leaves a remainder of 1 when divided by 9; and similarly for 7, 10, 13 and so on. We may therefore state Papus's theorem thus: if $n \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$, then $n^\circ \equiv 1 \pmod{9}$, where '$n \equiv m \pmod{k}$' means that n and m leave the same remainder when divided by k. Hence, Papus continues, all the numbers go round in a cycle of three, 5, 8, 11 and so on all being equivalent to 2, and 6, 9, 12, … all being equivalent to 3. Thus, in effect, he attempts to generalise his theorem by asserting that, if $n \equiv m \pmod{3}$, then $n^\circ \equiv m \pmod{9}$. Unfortunately, this is a fallacy. The generalisation is false, since $5^\circ = 15 \equiv 6 \pmod{9}$, and $8^\circ = 36 \equiv 0 \pmod{9}$, while $6^\circ = 21 \equiv 3 \pmod{9}$ and $9^\circ = 45 \equiv 0 \pmod{9}$. Thus Papus's entire scheme of interpretation is founded at the outset on a simple arithmetical mistake. In any case, it is left obscure why the fundamental diagram should take the form of a cross: it would seem more appropriate to give it the form of an inverted Y, so that, as we proceeded round the circumference, 4 should coincide with 1.

Papus claims that 1 represents the active principle of unity, 2 the passive principle of opposition and 3 the neuter principle of the action of opposition upon the unity; 4 represents a return to unity, and the infinite sequence of positive integers represents the unending cyclical repetition of this process. He then applies this scheme to the letters of the Divine Name: Yod corresponds to 1, the first He to 2, Vau to 3 and the second He to 4. This would have been more convincing if the fourth letter of the Tetragrammaton had been a repetition of the first, rather than of the second, which is why Paul Christian, in putting forward a similar idea, did much more wisely to base it on the sequence INRI; but Papus passes over this flaw in his theory without comment, merely remarking on the importance of the fact that the Divine Name contains only three distinct letters, and claiming that the correspondence between its letters and the numbers explains why Pythagoras, who had been initiated in Egypt into the mysteries of the Sacred Name, replaced it in his esoteric teachings by the sequence of the first four numbers. In the Divine Name, or in the numerical sequence, Yod or 1 is the positive and generative term, He or 2 is the negative and generant term, Vau or 3 is the neutral and generated term, and the second He or 4 is the term of transition: this universal law, he says, was symbolised in antiquity by the Cross. ('Generant' presumably means that out of which generation is effected.)

Only after this scheme has been painstakingly set out does Papus turn, in chapter 5, to apply it to the cards of the Tarot pack. He aims to extend Éliphas Lévi's idea that the four suits correspond to the four letters of the Tetragrammaton to the entire pack, so that such a correspondence, in fact a double such correspondence, may be attributed to each individual card. Following Lévi, he makes the suits correspond to the letters of the Divine Name, or to the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4, in the order Batons, Cups, Swords and Coins; appealing to an obvious sexual symbolism invoked by both Lévi and Christian, he takes Batons to represent the male or active principle, Cups the feminine or passive principle, and Swords the union of the two. Within each suit, the court cards correspond to the four letters in the order King, Queen, Cavalier, Jack; the Jack, being the fourth term or term of transition, represents the transition from the court cards to the numeral cards. Among the numeral cards, the Ace, 2, 3 and 4 obviously correspond to the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively, and hence, in that order, to the four letters of the Divine Name. But, since 4 is equivalent to 1, the 4 also begins the next sequence of four, the 4, 5, 6 and 7 again corresponding, in that order, to the four sacred letters; likewise, there is a final sequence of four, consisting of the 7, 8, 9 and 10. When any card figures both as the last term of one sequence and the first of another, the latter association overrides the former: thus the King, Ace, 4 and 7 correspond to Yod, the Queen, 2, 5 and 8 to He, the Cavalier, 3, 6 and 9 to Vau, and only the Jack and 10 to the second He. The 10s of Batons, Cups and Swords, being terms of transition, represent the transition to the next suit; the 10 of Coins represents the transition from the minor to the major Arcana. Thus every suit card has a double association with one of the four sacred letters: by its suit to one, and by its rank to another. We are also told that the sequence Ace, 2, 3, 4 represents the emanation of the sequence King, Queen, Cavalier and Jack in the divine world, the sequence 4, 5, 6, 7 its evolution in the human world, and the sequence 7, 8, 9, 10 its evolution in the material world, and, further, that each suit is formed, like a human being, of a material body, consisting of the Cavalier, 7, 8 and 9, a vital force, consisting of the Queen, 4, 5 and 6, an intellect, consisting of the King, Ace, 2 and 3, and of reproductive organs, consisting of the Jack and 10.

When Papus comes on to consider the major Arcana, it comes as no surprise that the I, II, III and IV correspond to the sacred letters in that order, or that the IV heads a new such sequence, IV, V, VI and VII. These two together form a septenary, the I, II and III forming an active or positive ternary, the IV, V and VI forming a passive or negative ternary, and the VII forming an element of transition from this septenary to the next. Likewise, the second septenary is formed of the cards from VII to XIII, and the third of those from XIII to XIX. There is then a final ternary, consisting of the XIX, XX, XXI and 0 (the Fool), which correspond, in that order, to the sacred letters: the 0 represents the term of transition from the major to the minor Arcana, and thus the circle is closed. Thus, in sum, Arcana I, VII and XIII correspond to Yod in a positive manner, IV, X and XVI correspond to it in a negative manner, and XIX corresponds to it in a neutral manner. Similarly, II, VIII and XIV correspond positively, V, XI and XVII negatively, and XX corresponds neutrally, to the first He; while III, IX and XV correspond positively, VI, XII and XVIII negatively, and XXI neutrally, to Vau. 0 alone corresponds to the second He. At the same time, the first septenary corresponds as a whole to Yod, the second to He, the third to Vau and the last ternary to the second He: the first septenary corresponds to God, the second to Man and the third to Nature, while the last ternary indicates what Papus calls 'the passage from the creative and providential world to the created and fate-governed world'. Thus, like the minor Arcana, every card in the major Arcana has a double correspondence to the sacred letters, one in virtue of the septenary or ternary to which it belongs, one in virtue of its position in that septenary or ternary.

It is obvious that this whole tortuous system of correspondences (of which I have omitted certain further complications) is wholly arbitrary: no one wanting to devise a pack of cards exhibiting a double correspondence with the letters of the Divine Name, or with the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4, would have hit on one with the structure of the Tarot pack. Papus offers no evidence that the key of interpretation he has devised is the correct one, other than its own intrinsic plausibility: even conceding all the required background assumptions, we cannot give it high marks for that. Equally arbitrary are the further symbolic meanings with which Papus invests the first three letters of the Divine Name (the fourth letter, the second He, being merely transitional, is for this purpose disregarded). He connects them with the idea of the Trinity, as he understands it. He thinks that one can equate the Christian Trinity both with the Hindu Trimurti of Brahmā, Vishnu and Shiva, and with the Egyptian trio of Osiris, Isis and Horus; but his understanding of it owes more to Hinduism than to Christianity, the first representing active creation, the second representing preservation, and the third transformation (he does not say destruction, which, in the Hindu theory, is the special activity of Shiva).

Having the key in one's possession, one has only to unlock the door. By his correspondences, Papus says, the meaning of each of the major Arcana can be deduced, once the meaning of Arcanum I is known. Following Paul Christian, he says that each Arcanum has three meanings, a superlative or Divine meaning in the Divine World, a comparative or Magic Astral meaning in the Human World, and a positive or Physical meaning in the Natural World. Triumph I, the Bagatto or Bateleur, signifies, in the Divine World, God the Father, in the Human World, Man or Adam, and, in the Natural World, the Active Universe or *Natura naturans.* He imposes some additional requirements: each card, from IV onwards, must be interpreted as deriving from that with a number three smaller; I and XXI, II and XX, and all pairs of cards whose numbers sum to 22, have complementary meanings; the meaning of a card midway between any other two, as V is midway between IV and VI and also between III and VII, must form a link between the meanings of the other two; and, in addition, the meaning of each card must correspond to the symbolic value of that letter of the entire Hebrew alphabet with which Éliphas Lévi associated it. But, even with all this complex apparatus, Papus's claim does not stand up: no one could, from these principles, reconstruct the triple meanings that Papus assigns to the cards, especially if he was not told of their traditional subjects and iconography; the claim is, after all, not to be able to infer the meaning of the card from the figure depicted on it, but to explain the figure from the meaning as deduced from underlying principles. In actual fact, however, the principles are, at the same time, insufficient to determine the meanings, and so numerous and complicated as to foil Papus's ingenuity in finding a set of meanings that satisfy them all. I should defy anyone to deduce convincingly from the stated principles that, for example, triumph VIII signifies, in the Divine World, the (human) Mother, in the Human World, Justice, and, in the Natural World, Elementary Existence; or to explain why Prudence forms a link between Justice and Magic Power (Prudence and Magic Power being the meanings, in the Human World, of IX and X), or why the Mother is complementary to Involution (the meaning, in the Divine World, of XIV). Papus discusses the symbolic meanings of the *lames* of the major Arcana at great length and with much reference to his system of correspondences; but the truth is that, in arriving at these interpretations, he frequently relies upon the appearance of the card, and not upon those principles, and, whenever his interpretation fails to fit some one of the many principles he has laid down, he passes over the defect in silence.

Having laboriously arrived at an interpretation of the cards, it must be made to yield a message with some definite content: it would be senseless to decipher a script in which nothing was written. The last chapter of Part II is therefore concerned to deliver this message: by reading the major Arcana in sequence according to their triple meanings, we obtain a theogony, an androgony and a cosmogony, a history of the evolution of the three different worlds. Much is said about the Trinity and the Hindu and Egyptian deities, about the Cabala, the Astral Light, called Od viewed positively and Ob viewed negatively, and so on. Despite all this, it is evident that Papus's interpretation has not succeeded in extracting from the Tarot any secret doctrine unattainable from other sources: on the contrary, each esoteric doctrine involved has been read into the Tarot rather than being read from it.

In particular, the claim that the Tarot pack is the supreme instrument of divination – not, indeed, a claim that has any prominence in Papus's book – has not been vindicated; for the scheme of interpretation does not suggest any specific method of using them for fortune-telling, while the interpretation itself is far too high-flown to yield predictions concerning the ordinary course of human life. Papus relegates his account of divination by means of the Tarot to his Part III, which is concerned with 'Applications of the Tarot'. There is first a chapter on 'The Astronomical Tarot', astrology having had no place in Papus's general interpretation; this consists largely of the essay by Oswald Wirth, already mentioned. There follow chapters on 'The Initiatory Tarot' and 'The Cabalistic Tarot'. The former comprises the excerpt from the essay by Barlet, which speaks extensively of theosophy, followed by the same author's essay on 'The Divine Name in the Tarot', which expounds a system for associating the cards with the sacred letters divergent from Papus's. The latter contains a brief account of Etteilla, followed by a short disquisition, preparatory for *Le Serpent de la Genèse*, by Stanislas de Guaita, involving a great deal of numerology and the Hebrew spelling of the name Adam. Finally, Papus gives seven lessons on the use of the Tarot for divination. These are introduced by the observation, 'The first part of our study of the Tarot, full of numbers, of Hebrew letters and of abstract deductions, is not calculated to attract the attention of ladies … It is, however, traditional that the future can be read by means of the Tarot, and our feminine readers will never forgive me if I ignore their natural curiosity on this point.' He then falls back on a systematised version of Etteilla's methods of fortune-telling, appealing to a new set of symbolic meanings for the cards bearing hardly any relation to his own general interpretation, but again derived from Etteilla. This is rounded off with an account of what is billed as 'the royal game of Human Life according to the Egyptians', but is actually Etteilla's fortune-telling game played with the Tarot pack; Papus claims that all games, including chess, dice and backgammon, are derived from the Tarot. The book concludes with a formidable diagram, entitled 'The Tarot: Cycle of Revolutions of IEVE (the Divine Name, written in Hebrew, follows in parenthesis). Absolute Key to Occult Science by Papus.'

Le Tarot des Bohémiens marks the high tide of Tarot occultism in France. An effort had been made to redeem the promise held out by Éliphas Lévi, and part of the occultist faith ever after, that the Tarot could be exhibited as a primary source of esoteric wisdom. The effort had been made: and it had failed. Ignore, for a moment, the historical question of the origin of the Tarot pack and the purpose for which it was devised: grant, for the sake of argument, that we *know* that its inventors concealed within it an esoteric doctrine, and, perhaps, at the same time, invested it with the power to reveal the future to one who understood its symbolism. Then the question arises: Are we able to uncover this secret doctrine, to find the key to the interpretation of the Tarot? And, in particular, did Papus succeed in doing so? Papus follows Lévi in ascribing oblique references to the Tarot to earlier occultists, to Guillaume Postel, Cardano and Saint-Martin. He adds some new ones of his own, e.g. the Rosicrucian manifesto of 1614, *Fama Fraternitatis Roseae Crucis*, on the strength of the quotation, 'They possess a book from which they can learn everything that is in the books already written and to be written'; he even has the effrontery to make the preposterous claim that his table of correspondences of the major Arcana with the sacred letters is the key of the Ars Magna of Ramon Lull, which, he says, is drawn entirely from the Tarot.[79] But neither Papus nor even Éliphas Lévi could pretend that there had been any continuous explicit tradition of interpreting the Tarot. Hence the criterion by which any proposed interpretation has to be judged correct is that it should explain the composition and iconography of the pack, and explain them so convincingly that we say, 'That *must* have been what the inventors of the cards had in mind.' Judged by this criterion, Papus's interpretation fails miserably. It fails, first, because its fundamental principle does not fit the Tarot pack any better than it might almost any other structure: it is imposed on the Tarot, not suggested by it. Secondly, because, even when the fundamental principle is accepted, it could be applied in any of a variety of ways distinct from that proposed by Papus. Thirdly, because, even when it is accepted and applied in that particular way, it does not yield any very specific interpretation. Fourthly, and most important of all, because, when the interpretation has finally been enunciated, no secret doctrine is revealed that had not already been used in arriving at the interpretation. When an encoded text has been successfully decoded, it should yield a message: that is the test that the decoding has been successful. But the Tarot yielded no message – no hidden truths, no novel propositions, that were not already familar from other sources. Now, finally, one might say that perhaps the ideą of de Gébelin and Éliphas Lévi, that the Tarot was a repository of esoteric doctrine, was mistaken: perhaps the correct idea was that of de M.*** and Paul Christian, that it was an instrument of divination. But, even here, the proposed interpretation fails. It does not yield any technique for foretelling the future: to obtain a method of using the Tarot pack for that purpose, it was necessary to fall back on a different set of ideas, the even more arbitrary cartomantic methods and symbolic meanings proposed by the despised charlatan Etteilla.

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[79] Papus, *The Tarot of the Bohemians*, translated by A.P. Morton, second edition, revised by A.E. Waite, London, 1910, pp. 78, 83. With characteristic carelessness, Papus seems to have confused a passage in the *Fama Fraternitatis* with one in the *Confessio Fraternitatis* of the following year. The former has 'by those' (i.e. the original eight brothers of the Rosicrucian Fraternity) 'was collected a book or volume of all that man can desire, wish or hope for' (Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, London, 1972, which reprints English versions of both the *Fama* and the *Confessio*, p. 242); the *Confessio* has 'Were it not a precious thing, that you could so read in one only book … all that which in all other books (which heretofore have been, and are now, and hereafter shall come out) hath been, is and shall be learned and found out of them?' (ibid., p. 253). The idea that in either case any reference to the Tarot is intended is simply ridiculous. The *Fama* and the *Confessio* are also printed in English versions in A.E. Waite, *The Real History of the Rosicrucians*, London, 1887, pp. 65-98, 440-3; the quoted passages are on pp. 72 and 89.

Papus surely knew that he had failed. In his *Traité méthodique de science occulte* of 1891, running to 1092 pages, he again reproduces Oswald Wirth's cards, but his discussion of the Tarot is brief and perfunctory; and this is remarkable in one who, only two years earlier, had claimed to base on it the absolute key to occult science. That is not to say that the failure was apparent to all, still less that the Tarot was henceforward dropped from the occultist repertoire. On the contrary, works on the Tarot continued to be produced. In 1896 an actor at the Comédie Française, R. Falconnier, tried his hand at reconstituting the Tarot triumphs, in a book entitled *Les XXII Lames hermétiques du Tarot divinatoire*, dedicated to Alexandre Dumas *fils*, 'to whom I owe my first notions of astrological chiromancy', and containing illustrations of designs for the triumph cards executed by Maurice Otto Wegener to Falconnier's instructions. Here the traditional designs have been revamped in a would-be Egyptian style, and there has been some rearrangement of the order and relabelling of the cards: e.g. the Moon is relabelled the Night and renumbered XXII, while the Fool, relabelled the Atheist, is numbered XXI. The cards are a reconstitution, in accordance with ancient texts, of twenty-two *lames d'or* used by Hermes Trismegistus for divination in a temple at Thebes, among whose ruins the figures may still be seen. Almost alone of ancient peoples, the Romans are conceded not to have known the Tarot, since Cicero did not mention it; but St Augustine referred to it in a letter to his mother, and Pope Gregory VII had a 'translation' made of it. The book ends with an astrological account of the divinatory meanings of the cards. In 1895, Jean Gaston Bourgeat published *La Magie*, a general work with some material on the Tarot, in which the suits are said to correspond to the four elements and also to the parts of the Sphinx's body, e.g. Cups to her breasts and Coins to her wings;[80] in 1906 he produced *Le Tarot: aperçu historique*, with cloudy illustrations, expounding a method of divination and a theory of the origin of the Tarot pack in India, from where it passed to Egypt. François Jollivet-Castelot, a prolific writer on alchemy, issued in 1897 his *Comment on devient alchimiste, … basé sur les clefs du Tarot*, a work of over 400 pages with a preface by Papus, setting out correspondences of the Tarot cards to the terms of alchemical theory.

A kind of résumé of the work of the entire neo-occultist school on the Tarot appeared quarter of a century later. When, in 1927, Oswald Wirth, who had become a major figure in French Freemasonry, belatedly issued his revised set of major Arcana, he published at the same time a substantial book, illustrated with the new designs, called *Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge*. In this he spoke of Stanislas de Guaita, who had been dead for thirty years, as the inspirer of the book, and as having spiritually aided him in its preparation. He repudiates the theory of the Egyptian origin of the Tarot, as advocated by de Gébelin, Etteilla and Paul Christian, but quotes Éliphas Lévi with strong approval, and, following him, attributes references to the Tarot to Guillaume Postel. The book is a kind of encyclopaedia of Tarot occultism, and, although its substance is absurd, it is written in an orderly and agreeable manner. Its elaborate discussion of the alleged symbolism of the Tarot pack is arranged very systematically in successive sections: numerological interpretation;

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[80] Or so it is stated by Walter Starkie in the appendix on the Tarot pack to his book, *In Sara's Tents*, London, 1953. I have seen only the undated fourth edition of *La Magie*, which indeed associates the parts of the Sphinx's body with the four elements, pp. 13-14, but not with the Tarot suits. The brief remarks on the Tarot, pp. 91-3, are devoid of content and highly apologetic; Bourgeat says that it is puerile to be guided in life by the cards, but that cartomancy, while it lacks a supernatural character, is a harmless amusement, better for the young than those post-War pleasures that have become the shame of the civilised world. I have not seen the work by Jollivet-Castelot referred to in the next sentence.

interpretation in terms of the Cabala; astrological interpretation; alchemical interpretation; divinatory significations; the Tarot as a representation of cosmogony; the Tarot as representing initiation into the occult; the correspondence between Masonic symbols and those of the Tarot pack; and methods of divination. Almost every occultist fantasy can be found, methodically tabulated, in its pages. In 1931, he returned once more to the subject, with a book called *Introduction à l'étude du Tarot.*[81]

As for Papus, he too returned to the subject, in 1909, with a book very different from his first one, *Le Tarot divinatoire: clef du tirage des cartes et des sorts.*[82] As its title indicates, the book is entirely concerned to promote Tarot cartomancy; Papus says that he aims to correct the absurd but widespread mistake of telling fortunes solely by the use of the major Arcana: to perform Tarot divination correctly, it is essential to use the minor Arcana as well. Although Éliphas Lévi was incapable of taking an unequivocal attitude to anything, the prevalent impression that he gave was that telling fortunes with cards was a petty and even despicable occupation, and that the real importance of the Tarot lay in its symbolic representation of profound esoteric truths. In de Guaita, this outlook is explicit: although, in his personal life, he was accustomed, like Lévi, to 'consult' the Tarot cards, in his writings there is scarcely a reference to divination. For Christian, preoccupied with divination by astrological and numerological means, the Tarot was not a pack of cards at all, but a sequence of symbolic images interwoven with his astrological theory. In Papus's book of 1889, cartomancy figures as a pastime suitable for the ladies, God bless them. But once, in that book, a sustained attempt had been made to display the deep hidden meaning of the Tarot pack that Lévi had said was to be found, and all that that labour had produced had been a ridiculous morsel, the grandiose claims on behalf of the Tarot pack could no longer be seriously advanced, even among the occultist public. The yield of the tree was too pitifully slight for it to continue to be cultivated as a source of occult doctrine. And yet its blossoms, its apparently mysterious images, were too attractive for it to be cut down. The occultists had, therefore, henceforth to gather from it a different, if less precious, crop, predictions; they had to swallow their pride and join forces with the heirs of Etteilla, the despised professional cartomancers. And so, with Papus's second book on the subject, the wheel has come full circle: the Tarot has proved a ROTA indeed, and we are back in the world of Etteilla, in spirit and, in large part, in matter. More accurately, we are back in the world of someone like Julia Orsini: for while, in Etteilla's confused writings, the ultimate objective was always a method of telling fortunes, a great mass of occult theory had cluttered up the route, whereas, in *Le Tarot divinatoire*, there is hardly a mention of those abstruse matters about which, twenty years earlier, Papus had said that the ladies should not bother their pretty little heads. (There is, admittedly, an echo in the Introduction of the earlier claims, when Papus writes, 'The Tarot, ... like the Ars Magna of Ramon Lull, which is an adaptation of it, allows one to resolve the greatest problems of philosophy. But this is not the side of it which will interest ladies who feel a curiosity about it.')

One may suppose Papus to have been sincere in *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, but it is hard to imagine that, in writing the later book, he any longer believed in what he was doing. Appended to the book is a series of illustrations of all 78 cards, described as a complete reconstitution of the 78 *lames* of the Egyptian Tarot: the designs, like Falconnier's, are highly Egyptianised, and are said to have been carried out by one Gabriel Goulinat 'after Egyptian documents and the personal labours of Éliphas Lévi'. The suit cards are numbered, from 22 to 77, according to Etteilla's system, and, in general, closely resemble those of Grand Etteilla I; the numeral cards have the same division into a main section and a lower panel displaying various symbols which, in the Swords suit, are Etteilla's 'Egyptian' nail-numerals, while the suit-signs of Coins still bear the astrological symbols of Grand Etteilla I. The triumphs are arranged in Lévi's order, the Fool bearing the numbering '0 (or 21)' and the World '(21 or) 22'. Each bears, besides an Arabic numeral, the corresponding 'French' (i.e. Roman), Hebrew, Sanskrit and 'Egyptian' letter and an astrological sign. Each card is inscribed with its divinatory meaning, upright or reversed, taken almost entirely from Etteilla. The text explains at length these divinatory meanings, and those of adjacent pairs of cards, again taken from Etteilla, and describes various cartomantic procedures, including a long account of Etteilla's method; one chapter reproduces the table of meanings of the *Dictionnaire synonimique*. In short, save for a brief section setting out Paul Christian's names for and interpretations of the major Arcana, the volume is nothing but a typical product of the Etteilla school. Such was the dismal end, in France, of what, though never less than ludicrous, had been a grand romantic tradition. It was not the end elsewhere; indeed, except in Britain, it had not yet begun.

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[81] I have not seen this. For illustrations of Wirth's 1927 designs for the major Arcana, see *Wahrsagekarten*, no. 72, and Kaplan, p. 286, showing the complete 78-card pack obtainable today.

[82] A second edition was issued in 1911, a fourth in 1925. See Kaplan, p. 211, for an illustration of the Tarot card designs by Goulinat included in the book, and referred to below. Kaplan, p. 282, also illustrates a pack produced in Brazil in 1974, based on those designs; in it, the Fool is numbered 21, the World 22, and the suit cards 23-78.

What is most striking about the writings of the neo-occultists concerning the Tarot pack is their complete indifference to any genuine historical evidence. Although Tarot cards do not, as they supposed, have a history extending over millennia, they do have one of several centuries; and one might have expected men who revered them as a source of the deepest wisdom, and who spent a great deal of their time in thinking and writing about them, to have made some effort to discover what that history was. But, although they avidly cite and copy one another, and make unfounded references to earlier magical writers, the one thing they appear never to have troubled to do is to acquaint themselves with the ascertainable facts about the history of the Tarot pack. Thus they frequently made great play with the etymology of the word *tarot* itself: besides the Egyptian derivations, it was also connected with the Hebrew word *torah* (law) or with the name of the goddess Ashtaroth. But, apart from any other considerations, every such derivation crumbles on the fact, of which the occultist writers seem utterly unaware, that the French word is an adaptation from the Italian *tarocco*, and that, in every language but French, the word has retained the hard *c* or *k* sound of its Italian original: no root which lacks this hard *c*, or substitutes for it a *t* or *th*, is in the least likely to be correct. Again, although in their 'reconstructed' or 'rectified' designs, the occultists blithely add details lacking any historical justification, they attach great weight, in elucidating the esoteric meanings of the cards, to the particular details of the designs found in the Tarot de Marseille. This was a standard pattern used by French and Swiss cardmakers from at least 1700, perhaps assuming its definitive form around 1600. On it all patterns used by Swiss, German, and Austrian makers of Italian-suited Tarot packs were no more than variants; from the eighteenth century on, it was also copied in Italy itself. It was, therefore, the most influential of all patterns used for Italian-suited Tarot cards. Nevertheless, although the designs of some of the cards in it may go back to a particular pattern used in fifteenth-century Italy,[83] it was certainly not itself the earliest pattern; it is therefore a poor guide to the iconographical intentions of those who originally devised the Tarot pack. There are many details of the Tarot de Marseille that are completely absent from the Italian hand-painted packs of the fifteenth century, from later Italian cards unconnected with the Tarot de Marseille and from earlier French Tarot cards: for instance, the wings on the figure of Temperance; the two little figures on the Pope card and the two others shown with the Devil; the symbols of the four Evangelists on the World card; the animals, in place of men, on the Wheel of Fortune; and the figures on the Star, Moon and Sun cards apparently representing the signs of Aquarius, Cancer and Gemini, though not recognised by the occultists as such. In some cases, the very identity of the subjects has become confused in the Tarot de Marseille: what on the French cards is perplexingly called 'La Maison Dieu' was in Italy known variously as 'the House of the Devil', 'the Lightning', 'the Fire' or 'the Tower'; the Hermit, who in the Tarot de Marseille carries a lantern, earlier carried an hourglass, and, while sometimes vaguely called 'il Vecchio' (the Old Man) or 'il Gobbo' (the Hunchback), is also, in the sixteenth-century Italian literature, sometimes called explicitly 'il Tempo' (Time), which is plainly what he represents. The occultists could have discovered these facts, had they been disposed to; instead, they imagined themselves to be interpreting the wisdom of ancient sages when, frequently, what they were basing their deductions on were the foibles or mistakes of ill-educated French cardmakers.

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[83] A single uncut sheet of late fifteenth-century Italian cards, no. I-1005, exists in the Cary Collection at Yale University, showing several cards closely resembling the Tarot de Marseille designs: specifically, the Chariot and the Sun exactly resemble the corresponding cards in the Tarot de Marseille, the Tower and the Moon resemble their counterparts save in certain details (there are no dogs on the Moon card and no lightning on the Tower card), the Bagatto, the Emperor and the Star have a moderate resemblance, and there is no resemblance at all in the case of the Devil, Temperance, Fortitude, the Popess and the Wheel; not enough of the designs of the Pope, Love and the Fool is visible for it to be possible to judge of them.

Naturally, also, the occultists attached great significance to the order of the subjects, and not unreasonably: anyone who attempts to understand the iconography of the pack will enquire why they come in just the order that they do. For the occultists, this order was crucial: on it depended the association of the triumph cards with the Hebrew letters, those of the alphabet or those of the Divine Name, on which many of their deductions hinged. But the fact of which they appear without exception to be ignorant is that this order is by no means universally the same. In France, indeed, the order exhibited by the Tarot de Marseille seems almost always to have been followed, not only in the Tarot de Marseille: it is that of the Catelin Geoffroy pack, made in 1557, and also of the early seventeenth-century French pack in the Bibliothèque Nationale.[84] It is true, also, that the same order is found in all Italian-suited Tarot packs made elsewhere outside Italy, which is not surprising, since it was probably from France that the Tarot pack, and the game played with it, spread to other European countries. But, apart from those packs which derive from the Tarot de Marseille, that order is totally unknown in Italy. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, a number of different orders seem to have been current in Italy, as will later be explained in more detail; not one of them coincides with the Tarot de Marseille order, and only one even resembles it. Why the French cardmakers adopted the precise order that they did, it is now impossible to be sure: but, in this instance also, a failure to undertake the simplest historical enquiry misled the occultists into ascribing to Hermes Trismegistus an idea stemming from someone no more venerable than Catelin Geoffroy.

Perhaps the most pathetic example of the occultists' ignorance of the actual facts about the Tarot pack is their unawareness of the peculiarity by which the numeral cards of Cups and Coins rank in increasing numerical sequence, the 10 being the lowest card, while those of Swords and Batons rank in decreasing sequence, the Ace being the lowest (though they did grasp that, in all suits, the Ace ranks below the court cards). Granted their fondness for numerological calculations and for reading symbolic significance into the most trivial feature, it can easily be imagined what a gift that would have been to them, if only they had known it, how much profound meaning could have been read into that genuinely odd feature. It would not have mattered to them that it was no more peculiar to the Tarot pack than are the Italian suit-signs, since, of course, they all believed that ordinary playing cards were derived from Tarot cards; but, because they disdained to undertake ordinary empirical enquiries, they missed a golden opportunity.

(iii) *The Gypsies*

The most notable example of the occultists' lack of historical sense is the connection which they came to maintain between the Tarot pack and the Gypsies, a thesis embodied in the very title of Papus's *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, and affirmed in that book as also in his *Traité méthodique de science occulte*. The suggestion first appeared in print in de Gébelin's section on the Tarot pack; but no one seems to have followed him in this particular speculation. Indeed, in 1784 Immanuel Breitkopf published an essay on the history of playing cards, entitled *Versuch, den Ursprung der Spielkarten zu erforschen*. In this great work, which was the first whole book to be devoted to the subject, and is incomparably better than the majority of those subsequently written on it, Breitkopf subjected de Gébelin's theories to a remorseless critical examination; while making many telling points against him, he attributed to him the theory that playing cards were introduced into Europe by the Gypsies, and refuted it by the observation that they were known in Europe before the Gypsies arrived. The theory thus criticised by Breitkopf was not de Gébelin's principal theory, but was suggested only parenthetically in introducing de M.***'s essay. The first writer plainly to have advanced that theory seems to have been Boiteau d'Ambly in his *Les Cartes à jouer et la cartomancie*, which appeared in 1854. Boiteau was not an occultist, but a scholar with serious intentions; but he had been influenced by de Gébelin and by Etteilla, to both of whom he refers extensively, and he supposed the Tarot pack to have been originally invented for fortune-telling; he also believed, as de Gébelin had done, that it was the earliest type of playing-card pack known in Europe, and that the regular pack had been derived from it by subtraction.

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[84] This pack is illustrated in Detlef Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte*, Leipzig, 1972, plate 15(a) and in H.-R. D'Allemagne, *Les Cartes à jouer*, Paris, 1906, vol. I, p. 194, vol. II, p. 206.

Boiteau believed that playing cards had originated in India, a hypothesis that has been defended in our own time by Dr Hellmut Rosenfeld; it followed that, somehow, they had reached Europe from India. But how? Boiteau was firmly of the opinion that playing cards were unknown in the mediaeval Islamic world; we know today that he was wrong about this, but he had no evidence against his view save the single statement from the Chronicles of Viterbo. How, then, before the Portuguese ships sailed to India, could playing cards have been transmitted from India to Europe without passing through the Islamic world? Boiteau did not, like de Gébelin, suppose the Gypsies to have been of Egyptian origin: he knew that they had come from India; and he conceived the ingenious hypothesis that it was they who had brought playing cards from India to Europe, without revealing them to the Muslims through whose lands they had passed on the way. He did not offer any positive evidence for this conjecture; but, after all, given his presuppositions, it appeared to be the *only* hypothesis that could explain the facts.

Boiteau was not a very good scholar, and his theory is radically confused. Regular playing cards are older in Europe than Tarot cards, and Boiteau had no sound reason for believing otherwise; but, given that he did believe otherwise, it must have been the Tarot pack that the Gypsies brought from India to Europe; and he explicitly drew this consequence, despite the fact that nothing resembling the Tarot pack has ever been known in India. Moreover, Boiteau's theory could not evade the crux about timing to which Breitkopf had drawn attention seventy years previously. The Gypsies first appeared in Western Europe in 1417, reaching Italy in 1422 and France in 1427. It would, therefore, be chronologically consistent to suppose them to have introduced the Tarot pack, of which we have no evidence from before 1440, but not playing cards in general, since they were known by 1377. The Gypsies cannot be credited with the introduction of playing cards in general, since they arrived too late; and, if this is conceded, there is no merit to the theory that they introduced the Tarot pack, since there is no evidence that it was ever known outside Europe.

The inconsistencies of Boiteau's theory were pressed by another French scholar, Romain Merlin, in his *L'Origine des cartes à jouer* of 1869; but his attack came far too late to prevent the incorporation of the Gypsy theory into the growing body of occultist doctrine concerning the Tarot pack. In 1857, three years after the publication of Boiteau's work, there appeared a book about the Gypsies which gave full endorsement to that theory: J.A. Vaillant's *Les Rômes*.

Jean Alexandre Vaillant (1804-1886) was a Frenchman who devoted his life principally to championing the cause of Roumanian nationalism, unity and liberty.[85] He began his career, not as a writer, but as a schoolteacher. He did not have the training of a scholar, and was not even very well educated, and he never converted himself into a genuine scholar: not only are his writings uncompromisingly partisan, but his inadequate stock of general knowledge betrayed him into error, and his naiveté into flimsily based and sometimes wild judgments. He was a romantic, an apostle of liberalism and the ideals of the French Revolution and also of national self-determination, indeed of nationalism as such. He was also deeply susceptible to the appeal of particular peoples, with whom he fell in love: all his life he was devoted to the Roumanians, but the Gypsies and, somewhat inconsistently, the Turks also won his fervent admiration. Much of his energy was consumed in ill-judged political activity, chiefly the publication of polemical pamphlets, which for the most part had little effect save to create personal difficulties for himself: although preoccupied with politics, he plainly lacked all political judgment, either practical or theoretical; he had no idea how to go about influencing the course of events, and his political proposals were vitiated by naiveté of outlook and a habit of uncritical allegiance to certain individuals and an equally uncritical enmity towards others. But he also had very considerable gifts as a linguist; and, besides his ephemeral writings on topical issues, he produced extended studies of the language and history of the peoples that attracted him.

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[85] Most of the following account of Vaillant's life and work is derived from Oltea Cudalbu-Sluşanschi, 'Contributions à la biographie et à l'oeuvre de J.A. Vaillant (1804-1886)', *Mélanges de l'École Roumaine en France*, vol. XIV, 1937-8, pp. 1-113. Cudalbu-Sluşanschi's account is sympathetic but judicious; he fails, however, to acknowledge how wild Vaillant's vagaries could be, being unaware of the *Bible de la science bohémienne* and of the *Clef magique*, the latter of which he wrongly identifies with the later *Lanterne magique*, and apparently not having studied *Les Rômes* very closely.

Vaillant's life was not, on the whole, a happy one: he never achieved much recognition, and his career was punctuated by a series of misfortunes, many of them brought about by his own ill-considered actions. As a result, he developed a paranoid streak, thinking himself the victim of unjust and malignant persecution, and nurturing a venomous hatred for those he regarded as responsible. He was a man of diverse moods, actuated sometimes by idealism, sometimes by bitterness; sometimes guided by a sober and sincere love of truth, sometimes prone to flights of wild fantasy. All these moods are displayed in his writing, which, taken as a whole, reveals a personality with strands so diverse as to appear almost schizophrenic. Some of it consists of lucid and dispassionate historical or philological exposition; some of agreeable personal narrative and anecdote; some of passionate denunciation of injustice; some of vitriolic diatribes; and some of fantastic speculation that seems hardly sane. *Les Rômes* is a good example of this, for, in that book, several of the diverse styles occur side by side; indeed, anyone who read the book, knowing nothing about Vaillant, could be forgiven for supposing it the result of a collaboration between two ill-matched individuals. Of these, he would think, one, who may be called proto-Vaillant, has written most of chapters 5 to 13, which give a factual account of the history of the Gypsies in Europe since 1417, with particular reference to Moldavia and Wallachia: he writes soberly but with strong feeling about the injustices inflicted on the Romany people; he gives the impression of reliability, and can be moving in his descriptions of the persecutions of the Gypsies and his plea for tolerance. The other partner in this strange collaboration, whom our puzzled reader might label deutero-Vaillant, has contributed the Avant-Propos and chapters 1 to 4, which purport to describe the earlier history of the Gypsies in their original home in India and during their intermediate wanderings; he also makes occasional appearances in the later chapters. He indulges in unrestrained fantasy, and seems totally unbalanced: no rational reader would be disposed to place the slightest trust in anything he says. Only by learning something of the rest of Vaillant's work and career do we begin to see how it is possible that a single individual could have written all of this extraordinary book.

Vaillant spent his early adult life in the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, mostly in Bucharest, engaged mainly in schoolteaching, an enthusiastic advocate of the study of French language and culture as a means of transmitting liberal ideals. He also published a *Grammaire vallaque* in 1836, a *Vocabulaire français-roumain et roumain-français* in 1839 and a *Grammaire roumâne* in 1840, and thus became one of the earliest students of the Roumanian language, arguing for its descent from Latin, as was then apparently necessary. His first publication had been *Hymne à la gloire* in 1832, a poem extolling Napoleon, liberalism and the Greek revolt against the Turks. He also conceived an interest in the Gypsies, many of whom were at that time actual slaves on the estates of the nobility. In 1841 he was implicated in a political conspiracy, and banished from the Principalities: from that year until 1845 he lived in Paris, making an unsuccessful attempt in 1842 to re-enter Wallachia, which earned him a short spell of imprisonment. During those years, he published a number of pamphlets on the Eastern question and the politics of the Principalities, as well as various articles on Roumanian subjects in the *Revue d'Orient*, of which the most interesting from our point of view was his first publication on the Gypsies, under the title 'Origines, langage et croyances des Romûni, Zind-Romes et Zind-cali (Bohémiens, Égyptiens, Gypsi, Gitanes, etc.)' in 1844.[86] In 1843, he published anonymously *Le Carru-boï*, which purported to be a translation of a Roumanian romance, but was actually a fantastic allegory of the history of the Roumanian people. In 1844-5, he published his *magnum opus*, *La Românie*, an admirably lucid and informative work in three volumes, of which the first two deal with Roumanian history and the third with Roumanian language, literature and other matters, with a little personal reminiscence; Vaillant appears to have been the first to have used something like the modern name, *Roumanie*, for the land, then usually referred to as *Moldo-Vallachie*. By 1845, partly owing to the publication costs of *La Românie*, Vaillant was heavily in debt, and unsuccessfully applied to the Ministry of Public Instruction for a subvention to undertake three projects, one of which was a study of the history and language of the Gypsies.

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[86] *Revue de l'Orient*, vol. IV, 1844, pp. 126-140.

From the end of 1845 until the middle of 1848, Vaillant, having again failed to gain entry to the Principalities, was in Constantinople, and there conceived a passionate admiration of the Turks: he was in high favour with the Sultan, to whom he addressed flattering verses and whom he presented with a manuscript treatise on the Turkish language. However, in 1848, he again destroyed his own chances by acting as the leader of an agitation against the French Embassy for failing to fly the Republican flag; so, when he applied to the Sultan for help in visiting Asia to pursue his studies of the early history of the Gypsies, he was regretfully refused, and had to return to Paris. There he remained until 1857, save for an unsuccessful visit to London in the winter of 1848-9. From 1849 to 1851, he was reduced to utter destitution, and nearly starved: it is unclear what rescued him from this condition. Nevertheless, these years were highly productive. Between 1848 and 1850 he wrote articles in the *Revue d'Orient* on Roumania, on Turkish grammar and on the Ottoman Empire. In 1851 he published some translations of Roumanian poems entitled *Poésies de la langue d'or*. In the same year, he brought out what may represent the first fully-fledged appearance of deutero-Vaillant, a booklet of 62 pages entitled *Évangile selon le plus vieux des pélerins, le plus franc des prophètes, le plus vrai des socialistes, le bohémien Narad, fils de Nun, vainqueur des deux grandes prostituées d'Orient et d'Occident*; this was to constitute Parts 1 and 2, out of a projected twenty-five parts, of a *Bible de la science bohémienne: Voyage à travers les temps, les pays et les peuples, ou Révélation de l'Argo antique et de la science des Saganes, par Narad, fils de Nun*. No further parts of this work were published. I have not seen it, but its occultist character cannot be in doubt; R. Yves-Plessis, in his bibliography of French writings on magic, comments that the booklet is interesting for the Satanist opinions of the author and the notes relating to the cult of Satan.[87] Evidently, by this date, Vaillant had already developed some peculiar ideas which he associated with the Gypsies.

In the years 1853-7 Vaillant published many pamphlets on the Eastern question. Roumanian independence had to be won both from the ancient Ottoman hegemony and from the more recent dominance of Tsarist Russia; but Vaillant, for all his commitment to Roumanian liberty, took an unequivocal stance in the conflict between those two powers. In *Turkie et Russie*, published in 1854 and dedicated to the Sultan, he extolled the Turkish nation as the vanguard of civilisation and virtue and, very oddly, as imbued with the sentiment of equality; but he denounced pan-Slavism, and for Russia itself he could scarcely find words harsh enough, saying that there you could find many serfs but could hardly find a man. Then, in 1857, Vaillant published the work that chiefly concerns us: *Les Rômes, Histoire vraie des vrais bohémiens*.

Something very odd seems to have happened to Vaillant while he was in Constantinople. The old Vaillant is still very much there: those parts of *Les Rômes* that I imagined a puzzled reader ascribing to proto-Vaillant resemble *La Românie* in their agreeable style and the sincere indignation against injustice that informs them. In the other parts of the book, however, Vaillant makes a string of wild assertions, often without the backing of any evidence at all, and never with evidence of an ordinary kind. It is usually impossible to discover even which century he is talking about; he appears to believe in magic. The basic method of this deutero-Vaillant might jocularly be called etymological: that is to say, he juxtaposes clusters of words from different languages, often without saying which languages they belong to, that have a roughly similar sound, and takes this as proof that the objects for which they stand are connected; never once does he undertake any actual philological enquiry into whether the words he juxtaposes have in fact a common derivation. He obviously believed that he had, in this technique, a means of discovering truths unguessed at: on the last two pages of the book, he waxes lyrical about 'the word', that key to wisdom, saying that 'the naked beauty of the word is the evident sign of the light of the earth

[87] R. Yves-Plessis, *Essai d'une bibliographie française ... de la sorcellerie*, Nieuwkoop, 1971, no. 880.

and of the intelligence of man'. Indeed, the immediately preceding and virtually untranslatable passage gives a good idea of the quality of his verbal associations. He tells us that he had learned the secret of this great method of discovery from a wise man at the Ottoman court. That court was, of course, then generally known as the Porte ('gate' in old French, 'door' in modern French); and, speaking of his mentor, Vaillant says, 'ce *sage* de la *Porte*, *der-vis* persan, door's-wise anglais, qui m'en a livré la clef et dévélé la parole, ... cette clef de la porte de la *sagesse*'. (The italics are Vaillant's: a lame rendering might be, 'this wise man of the Porte, "dervish" in Persian, "door's-wise" in English, who gave me the key and unveiled for me the word, ... that key to the door (*porte*) of wisdom'.) Here, translated as best I can, is a typical passage: 'The Anaki ... had composed the Cabala, that is, the signs, letters or figures ... which perfectly expressed things and facts ... One would almost say that *Kabul* was one of their cities and that the Anaki had hidden the *Cabala* in it, as, later, under their name of Anak-ins, they hid it in the *Ka'ba* of Arabia. For if ... *Abrahm* built that square *cabin* (*cabane*), that *cubic* house, ... before him *Brahma* had created ... the Tantara or zodiac of the earth, from whose square or *cube*, the type of all perfection, was made the goddess *Cyb*-ele'. (I hope that readers will not have been too distracted by the c-b associations to notice that between the names of Abraham and Brahmā.)[88] The reader of *Les Rômes* had to plough through 182 pages of this sort of stuff before he came to the level-headed contributions of proto-Vaillant.

A subordinate technique used by deutero-Vaillant is the reinterpretation of the Old Testament. For instance, Moses did not say, 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth', but, 'Isis the mother gave birth to the elements and the air of the heavens and the earth'.[89] The characters of the Bible have to be understood allegorically, as a representation of the science of the stars.[90] The main thesis of deutero-Vaillant is that three peoples, the Zath, the Meydes and the Bodhas, later known as the Pali, the Medes and the Bhutanis (*Boutains*), lived together peacefully in remote antiquity in the north of India, occupying a territory stretching from Kabul to Agra, which constituted the garden of Adon or Eden. Together, these three peoples were the creators of science, as a result of which the Indians named them *Ianak* and the Tartars named them *Anaki* ('perfect'): it is from them that science, and with it civilisation, has spread over the whole earth. The fundamental science, which constitutes their principal contribution, is that of astronomy, on which depend the arts of agriculture, medicine, navigation and architecture. The dissemination of this vital knowledge was in large part due to the subsequent wanderings of the Romanies, who are to be identified with the Zath, though intermingled with the Meydes and the Bodhas; we thus owe the civilisations of the Middle East and of the Mediterranean principally to the migrations in very early times of the people known later as Gypsies. They are to be identified with the Phoenicians and also with the Pelasgians; their name of Anaki gave rise to that of Canaan, and that of Pali to the name Palestine or Palis-tan. 'It is because they have always journeyed that science was created, and ... they carried it with them from India since remotest antiquity ... Their *pythons*, thinkers or learned men, filled Canaan, Egypt and Greece; their *curi*, men of letters or militants of science, civilised Colchis and Crete, Italy and the Gauls; every Saxon for whom "*talk*" and "*tell*" mean "say" and "recount" can easily understand that their oracles *Telkas* and *Telmas* are descended from these *Telchines* of Colchis, who gave to Greece its first civilisation ... It is from them that Englishwomen take their quality of *lady*, an expression for the sex of *Eve* ... whose modesty was expressed among the Greeks by *Ladon* and whose immodesty was expressed by *Leda*'.[91] They invented the cults of Diana and of Apollo; subsequently, their myth of Isa-Kris'ten or Kesu Chris'ten, a sun god introduced in India in the eleventh century B.C., gave rise to the myth of Jesus Christ.[92]

The importance of Vaillant for our story is that he is always cited by occultists as an authority for saying that the Gypsies have always had a knowledge of the Tarot pack, have used it for divination and introduced it into Europe. Vaillant's discussion of the Tarot pack occurs in his chapter 12, entitled 'Anecdotes' and recounting some of his personal experiences. The first part of the chapter belongs to the proto-Vaillant part of the book: it represents Vaillant in his travel-book vein of chatty reminiscence, and is largely taken up with a long story, narrated to him by a Roumanian Gypsy called Stancio, concerning two changelings, one a prince and the other of Gypsy birth. At the end of this occurs the one, extremely flimsy, piece of evidence offered by Vaillant for the Gypsy knowledge of the Tarot pack: while he and Stancio were talking in Stancio's house, Stancio's wife Iana had been seated at a table, playing with some cards; this happened twenty years before the time of writing, when Vaillant was as yet unacquainted with the Tarot pack, but he had subsequently come to realise that the cards Iana was using were Tarot cards. Vaillant does not say that Iana was telling fortunes with the cards; in any case, the reliability of a report from twenty years previously, at a time when Vaillant could not have recognised a Tarot pack if he had seen one, is low: they may just as easily have been cards from some other type of Italian-suited pack, such as a Trappola pack, especially as Vaillant displays no awareness that the Italian suit-signs are used for any form of regular pack.

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[88] For this passage, see J.A. Vaillant, *Les Rômes*, Paris, 1857, pp. 54-5.

[89] *Les Rômes*, p. 113.

[90] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[91] Ibid., pp. 20-1.

[92] Ibid., pp. 21, 63.

At this point in the chapter, deutero-Vaillant abruptly takes over, and rhapsodises about the Tarot pack. There had been some references to the word *tarot* or *taro* in the first four chapters; for instance, 'it was from this sphere' (the 'Sphere of world') 'whose light is truth, whose zodiac is the book which contains it, and whose stars are the figures and letters which name it, that the *Anak* borrowed their *tara*, the Gypsies their *tarot*, the Phoenicians their As-*tharoth*, the Egyptians their *Athor* and the Hebrews their *Thorah*'.[93] But, from these passages, anyone unaware what the Tarot was would suppose it to be some kind of astronomical system. Now, acknowledged as a pack of cards, it is stated to be a 'synthesis of all that made up the faith of the ancient peoples'; its figures, though modified in various ways over the course of time, are manifestly allegorical and conform to the civil, philosophical and religious doctrines of antiquity. Modelled on the astral wheel of Athor, who is also Ashtaroth, it 'resembles the Indian *ot-tara*', and may be considered to be of Indo-Tartar origin, though that origin is lost in the mists of time. Altered in various ways by the different ancient peoples among whom it spread, it was one of their books of occult science, and must have been known to the Romans, perhaps from the earliest days of the Republic. It is the synthesis of the harmony between men and the stars, and was, throughout time, the book of divinatory art.

Vaillant then comes on to a detailed description of the Tarot pack, which, he says, is principally founded on the numbers 3, 4 and 7. The four suits correspond to the four seasons; the fourteen cards of each suit to the seven days and seven nights of a week; the nine numeral cards, from 2 to 10 in each suit, to the nine months of human and of stellar gestation; the ten numeral cards of each suit to a decade of months; and the thirty-six numeral cards from 2 to 10 in all four suits to the thirty-six decans of the year. Cups or *pohara* correspond to 'les arcs ou arches du temps, les vases ou vaisseaux du ciel'; literally, to 'the arcs or arches of time, the vases or vessels of the sky', but I leave the reader to make a better translation if he can. Coins correspond to stars. Swords or *spathis* correspond to flames or rays. Batons or *pal* correspond to shadows, stones, trees and plants. Vaillant then goes on to state particular correspondences for the Ace, 2, 3 and 9 of Cups, the Ace, 3 and 9 of Coins, and the Aces of Swords and Batons; some of these, especially the association of the 2 of Cups with the cow and so with Isis, seem to be based on the Aluette pack, a regular Spanish-suited pack used in France for the game of Aluette, in which the 2 of Cups is adorned with a cow. The Aluette pack has no particular connection with the Tarot pack; the confusion between the two can be traced to de Gébelin. Vaillant then discusses the court cards and the triumph cards, some of them in detail. Card 78 is the Fool, and is equivalent to zero, which reduces the number of cards to seventy-seven, composed of seventy temporal elements and the six days of creation (*sic*).

Vaillant refers to de Gébelin's *Le Monde primitif*, and it is evident that much of what he says is derived from that book. It is also plain, from his description of the pack, that he was familiar with some form of Tarot pack made in the tradition of Etteilla. This is clear from his reference to the Fool as 'card 78', from his allusion to the days of creation, and from his mention of one card (the Devil) as representing *force majeure* and to another (the Chariot) as depicting *le triomphateur*. On the other hand, to those triumph cards that he discusses individually he assigns numbers as in the Tarot de Marseille; moreover, his description of the Moon card fits the Tarot de Marseille design, but not that in any Etteilla-derived pack known to me. It is thus likely that he had also seen a Tarot de Marseille pack; or, possibly, the pack that he knew was a hybrid one. A few indications raise the question whether he had not also seen Éliphas Lévi's *Dogme de la haute magie*, or even his *Rituel*; but there is no ground for certainty about this. It is also not unlikely that he had read Boiteau d'Ambly's *Les Cartes à jouer et la cartomancie*, which may have been the source from which he learned about de Gébelin and which gave him the idea of the Indian origin of the Tarot pack and its association with the Gypsies; but, again, one cannot be sure.

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[93] Ibid., p. 126.

In a manner very similar to Lévi, he concludes that 'the Tarot antedates Moses' and 'goes back to the origin of the centuries, to the epoch when the Zodiac was devised' and that, consequently, it had been in existence for 6,600 years. 'Such,' he continues, 'is this *tarot* of the Gypsies, from which by antilogy the Hebrews made the *torah* or law of Jehovah. Far from being a game, as it is nowadays, it is a book, a serious book, the book of symbols and emblems, of analogies and of connections between men and the stars, the book of destiny, with the aid of which the sorcerer unveiled the mysteries of fate.' Its symbolism and composition, and the practice of telling fortunes with it, caused Christians to regard it as magical and to proscribe it. 'It is thus that, as faith in its word was lost, the *tarot* became a game, and its tablets were modified according to the taste of the peoples and the spirit of the age ... Under Charles V, called the Good, St Bernard of Siena condemned to the flames the cards, called *triumphal*, of the game of *triomphe* that was already played in honour of the triumphant Osiris or Ormuzd, one of the cards of the tarot', etc., etc.

In the last sentence quoted, Vaillant is referring to Charles V of France, who died in 1378, and to a famous bonfire of frivolities, including playing cards and dice, staged by St Bernardine of Siena in 1423: one source states that *triumphales charticellae*, i.e. Tarot cards, were burned in the flames, but, whether or not that is so, Vaillant is hopelessly confused.[94]

As evidence that the Tarot pack is peculiarly the heritage of the Gypsies, nothing could be flimsier than the miniscule observation made by proto-Vaillant. The lengthy disquisition upon the Tarot then made by deutero-Vaillant is wholly in the style of the occultists, and, with one exception, contains nothing but generalities. Despite his favourable references to magic and his explicit association of the Tarot pack with divinatory practices, Vaillant is principally concerned to interpret the 'manifestly allegorical' figures on the cards as representing a system of astronomy; his attempt has as little plausibility as the more mystical interpretations of the occultists. Yet it is on that interpretation that his historical assertions rest: since it has an astronomical meaning, its invention must be attributed to that great first civilisation in India which Vaillant credits with the first discovery of astronomy, and it must be associated with that people, the Gypsies, who, departing from India and wandering over the earth, brought science and civilisation to the rest of mankind.

The one exception consists in the names that Vaillant gives for the suits of Cups, Swords and Batons, viz. *pohara*, *spathis* and *pal*, which, from the context, are presumably to be taken as being in plural form; he gives no special name for the Cups suit. He does not say to which language they belong, nor does he indicate that they were in use among Gypsies in Roumania or elsewhere; in discussing the various suits, he simply gives these names, between commas, after the usual French ones, leaving the reader to make what he will of them. Words similar to all three exist in Roumanian, Magyar and, as I was informed by Professor Peter Geach, Polish; they derive, respectively, from German *Becher* and Latin

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[94] The Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. XVI (May, vol. V), Antwerp, 1685, prints three lives of St Bernardine, whose feast-day is 20 May. Of these, the first and latest, written some time after the translation in 1472 of St Bernardine's body, which it records, speaks of *triumphales charticellae* as being brought out to be burned (p. 267*, col. 1). However, the first of the two earlier lives, written, according to the editor (p. 257*, col. 1), in 1445, within a year of the Saint's death, mentions only *naibes* (regular playing cards) as having been burned (along with dice and game boards). Furthermore, the sermon preached by the Saint on this occasion (Sermo 41 'Contra alearum ludos', Quadragesimale de christiana religione, *S. Bernardini Senensis O.F.M. Opera Omnia*, ed. PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, vol. II, Florence, 1950, p. 23) mentions only regular playing cards, and not *triumphi* (although it is true that St Bernardine does appear familiar with packs having four court cards per suit, as he speaks of Queens as well as Kings and *milites superiores et inferiores*).

spatha and *palus*. In their singular forms, they are, in Roumanian, *pahar, spadă* and *par*; in Magyar, *pohár* (plural *pohara*), *spádé* and *palca*; in Polish, *puchar, szpada* and *pal* (plural *pale*). It will be seen that the forms given by Vaillant, whether taken as singular or plural, do not together precisely fit any of these languages; especially the form *spathis*, with its terminal *s*, does not do so. Vaillant's treatment of words in *Les Rômes* is, however, cavalier in the extreme, so that we should not set much store by this. If we assume, what Vaillant does not say, that he got them from some Gypsies, they must have been borrowings from one or more of these languages, slightly corrupted in the case of *spathis*; they are certainly not ancient Romany words, but would argue an acquaintance, on the part of those Gypsies in Roumania with whom Vaillant had been in contact, with a Latin-suited pack. Now, at the date at which Vaillant was writing, the Tarot pack was not familiar to card players in central and eastern Europe in its Italian-suited form; it had long been adapted to a French-suited version. Hence, if the Latin-suited pack known to these Gypsies were a Tarot pack, there would be a ground for thinking that the original Italian-suited form of the pack had been preserved amongst them at a time when it was not known to the non-Gypsies surrounding them. There is, however, no reason to suppose that it was a Tarot pack, since a form of 36-card Italian-suited regular pack, the Trappola pack, was still well known in central Europe. The Trappola pack was used to play a particular game, called in Czech *špády*, descended from the sixteenth-century Venetian game of Trappola; it was particularly popular in Austria, Bohemia and Silesia, and could therefore have been known to itinerant Gypsies. Indeed, it seems particularly likely that it was a regular Italian-suited pack, and not a Tarot pack, with which Vaillant's Gypsy informants were familiar, since he does not cite any unfamiliar name for the triumph cards, but, like de Gébelin, calls them *atouts*, the ordinary French word for 'trumps'. Vaillant himself does not base any deduction upon these special names for the suits, nor even claim them as words particularly in use amongst Gypsies.

It seems clear that Vaillant had practically no information, if any, about any Gypsy use of the Tarot cards. He had been intoxicated by the theories of de Gébelin and, perhaps, of Lévi, and by the mysterious appearance of some Etteilla-derived pack; and he had eagerly leapt to the conclusion – or, more likely, had eagerly accepted Boiteau's claim – that the pack was of Indian origin and was, in a special way, the property of the Gypsies, for whom he had so vivid a romantic admiration.

It is tragic that *Les Rômes*, which would otherwise have been a powerful plea that the Gypsies should be treated with respect and compassion, should have been discredited by the effusions of deutero-Vaillant that disfigure it: Vaillant's name is now remembered only for this book, and that only by occultists, who are anxious to be able to appeal to the testimony of an authority on the Gypsies that the Tarot pack is associated with them. More generally, it is tragic that Vaillant should have been afflicted by some form of mental degeneration which must have set in during his stay in Constantinople; for, though his opinions had often been absurd and he had frequently been carried away by his enthusiasms, he had done serious and useful work. And, indeed, he remained capable of such work, as one later book shows. From 1857 to early 1860 he was once more in the Principalities: a friend and supporter of Prince Gregory Ghica of Moldavia, who had abdicated the Moldavian throne in 1856, and who died the next year in France, he went on behalf of the Prince's widow to safeguard her inheritance. His efforts were unsuccessful, probably not through his fault; but he appears to have lost interest in his mission, and to have become again involved in internal politics. In 1859 he was sued by the Princess in the courts for failure to carry out work for which he had been paid, and was ordered to repay her a large sum; seriously ill and obsessed with a neurotic fear of being poisoned, he conceived a deadly hatred for her. Back in Paris in 1860, he published a *Mémoire justificatif contre la Princesse veuve Ghyka (née Leroy)*. In the next year, 1861, he published a Romany grammar, *Grammaire, dialogues et vocabulaire de la langue rommane des Sigans*, republished in 1868 as *Grammaire, dialogues et vocabulaire de la langue des Bohémiens ou Cigains*. This contained a letter to Garibaldi, as the liberator of Italy and a veteran Roumanophile, as a somewhat irrelevant appendix; it also contained a Preface in which, under the disguise of a life of the 'sagus-baro Vitéaz', living at the time of the Ostrogoths, Vaillant wrote his autobiography as a victim of intrigues and persecutions. In the same year he published a book entitled *Clef magique de la fiction et du fait: Introduction à la science nouvelle*, which I have not seen. Since Papus refers to it in his *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, it may be about the Tarot; but, since Papus wrongly assigns the date of publication as 1863, and since the book had an introduction by Henri Disdier, a man who displayed no interest in occultism, it may not. In any case, it is almost certainly in the deutero-Vaillant vein: perhaps the 'key' of the title is not the Tarot pack, but the method of *'la parole'* exemplified in the early chapters of *Les Rômes*. Papus also cites a work of Vaillant's called *La Bible des Bohémiens*, of 1860, to which I have found no other reference: if there was really such a book, it, too, may or may not have been about the Tarot; but it may also be that Papus meant to refer to the *Bible de la science bohémienne* of 1851, already mentioned. In any case, it is only of *Les Rômes* that even the occultists have kept the memory green.

With the two Principalities united under one ruler, Vaillant returned to Roumania in 1862, and remained there until about 1869. His services to the Roumanian people were at last recognised by the award of a State pension in 1864, which, however, was paid somewhat irregularly. He gave free public lectures on ancient history; his only publication during those years seems to have been *La Lanterne magique* in 1868, a poem of 83 pages on Roumanian political and social questions, containing some vehement personal attacks on individuals who had displeased him. In about 1869, he returned to Paris, and lived there until his death in 1886: an old blind widower, living with his adopted daughter and forgotten in all the circles of Roumanian exiles and sympathisers where once he was well known, his one consolation was that, after the establishment of the Roumanian Kingdom in 1881, he was awarded the Cross of Commander of the Crown of Roumania.

After the publication of *Les Rômes*, Éliphas Lévi was quick to adopt the new dogma of the association of the Tarot pack with the Gypsies. Absent from the *Dogme de la haute magie* of 1855 and virtually absent from the *Rituel de la haute magie* of 1856,[95] the dogma is firmly entrenched in Lévi's *Histoire de la magie* of 1860, where a whole chapter is devoted to the Gypsies, complete with an extensive quotation from *Les Rômes*. Thereafter, this dogma was to be an integral part of the occultist faith concerning the Tarot pack. It is clear enough why the idea made so strong an appeal to the occultists. Not only are the Gypsies widely credited with pyschic powers and esoteric knowledge, a belief which they do their best to foster: but the ascription to them of a continuous tradition in the magical use of the Tarot pack helped to fill the void created by the absence of any mention before 1781 of its occult meaning or cartomantic properties. If the Tarot pack is the repository of fundamental knowledge about the universe and a powerful instrument for the discovery of truth, it is strange indeed that the fact should have gone unrecorded for so many centuries. If, however, during all that time, the secret remained known only to a mysterious people concerning whom the written records are so obligingly sparse, then the lack of documentary testimony becomes very much easier to explain.

The fact is, however, that there is virtually no evidence for Gypsies telling fortunes with Tarot cards, or indeed with playing cards of any kind, from before the twentieth century. Gypsies have, from their first arrival in Europe, made money by telling fortunes: but their favoured method was always palmistry. An Act was passed against the Gypsies in England in 1530, under Henry VIII, as in many other countries, for the Gypsies have been the victims of as cruel and as persistent persecution in Europe as the Jews. This Act accuses them of having 'used great, subtil, & crafty means to deceive the People, bearing them in hand, that they by Palmestry could tell Mens & Womens Fortunes', but says nothing of cartomancy. Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim, a famous occultist, wrote of them in 1531 that 'they amuse men by telling fortunes by chiromancy, begging provisions by these frauds';[96] again, no other method of divination is credited to them. Martin Crusius, likewise, writing in 1596, quotes a work of Caspar Hedio of 1537 as saying that they make ridiculous prophecies for money by means of chiromancy;[97] while Estienne Pasquier, also writing in 1596, quotes a manuscript diary of the early fifteenth century as recording the arrival of the Gypsies in France in 1427, and as speaking of there being amongst them 'sorceresses who look at people's hands and tell them what has happened and what is going to happen to them'.[98] A dissertation concerning the Gypsies presented to the Faculty of Philosophy at Leipzig University in 1652, vehemently hostile to them, and concluding that they should not be tolerated, mentions the practice of chiromancy by Gypsy women, but again says nothing about playing cards of any kind.[99] The earliest scholarly work on the Gypsies, H.M.G. Grellmann's *Die Zigeuner* of 1783, speaks as usual of chiromancy on the part of Gypsy women, and also of Gypsy cures of sick or bewitched cattle, detection of thefts, use of nostrums and so on, but is entirely silent about cartomancy or card play.[100] J. Hoyland's *Historical Survey of the Customs, Habits and Present State of the Gipsies* of 1816 mentions palmistry but not playing cards; and in the whole of the works of George Borrow – *The Zincali* (1841), *The Bible in Spain* (1843), *Lavengro* (1851), *The Romany Rye* (1857), all concerned with the Gypsies, and *Romano Lavo-Lil* (1873), a Romany word-book to which is appended an account of Gypsy fortune-telling – there is not a single allusion either to Tarot or to cartomancy. F.H. Groome's 'The Gypsies', in *National Life and Thought*, edited by W. Sheowring and C.W. Thies and published in London in 1891, likewise speaks of palmistry but not of playing cards; and cartomancy goes unmentioned in two scholarly studies of Gypsy folk-lore and magic by Heinrich von Wlislocki, *Volksglaube und religiöser Brauch der Zigeuner* and *Aus dem inneren Leben der Zigeuner*, published in Göttingen in 1891 and 1892. Another work of the same date, *Gypsy Sorcery and Fortune Telling* (London, 1891), by Charles Godfrey Leland, President of the Gipsy-Lore Society, has a single passage from the opening of which it looks as though we have, at last, hit upon evidence of Gypsy cartomancy: 'in 1886,' he wrote, 'I learned from a girl in Florence two invocations (in Italian) which she was accustomed to repeat before telling fortunes by cards'; but then he adds, 'This girl ... looked Etruscan with a touch of gypsy blood' (*sic*).[101] Of course, we do not expect every investigator to discover everything; but, were the use of Tarot cards or the practice of telling fortunes with cards truly among the Gypsies' most cherished traditions, it would be singular indeed that none of these observers should have noticed it.

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[95] One allusion to it occurs in the *Rituel*, in the phrase, 'the Tarot of the Magi and of the Gypsies': see *Transcendental Magic*, p. 375, where *bohémiens* is wrongly translated 'Bohemians'. Lévi had read Boiteau d'Ambly's book, to which he refers, ibid., p. 398.

[96] Henrici Cornelii Agrippae ab Nettesheym, *De Incertitudine & Vanitate Scientiarum & Artium*, Paris, 1531, chapter 'De Mendicitate', p. xciii recto: 'gentes ille (*sic*) quos Cynganos vocant ... ex chiromantica divinatione oblectantes homines, ijs fraudibus victum mendicant.'

There is, admittedly, a little testimony to the opposite effect: but, apart from Vaillant, all of it, with one exception, dates from after the Second World War. The sole exception is Adriano Colocci's *Gli Zingari*, published in Turin in 1889.[102] Colocci attached little importance to the matter, relegating his account of it to a footnote. Nor is he an independent witness: he refers both to de Gébelin and to Vaillant, and follows Vaillant very closely, repeating his statement that the suits represent the four seasons, the nine cards from 2 to 10 the nine months of human gestation, and the 36 cards in these denominations in all four suits the 36 decans. His list of the triumph cards is copied from Vaillant, and he even repeats Vaillant's blunder about St Bernardine under Charles V (though he does say 'Bernardine' and not 'Bernard'). He does not ascribe an immense age to the Tarot pack, but asserts that the Gypsies introduced it into Europe. He gives the Gypsy name for the pack as *taroth*, and for the suits as *rup, pohara, spathis* and *pal*. All but *rup*, which is the ordinary Romany word for 'coin', cognate with *rupiah* = rupee, were presumably copied from Vaillant; it would be remarkable if Italian Gypsies were using for 'Cup' a word derived from Magyar. In any case, it is no proof that Gypsies *in Italy* had any knowledge of Tarot cards that they had words for the Italian suit-signs; and Colocci gives no Romany name for the triumph cards. Colocci's remarks are all generalities, and supply no concrete evidence for the use of Tarot cards by Gypsies: his testimony can surely count for very little.

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[97] Martini Crusii, *Annalium Suevicorum Dodecastertia*, Frankfurt, 1596, books VII of this part III, p. 384: 'Multa ab eis furta & ... impostura, per chiromantiam & ridiculos (*sic*) nummi causa vaticationes, profecta'. Crusius is quoting Caspar Hedio's additions (*Paraleipomena rerum memorabilium*), p. 402, to his edition of 1537 of the Chronicle of Abbot Burchardus of Ursperg, which he later translated into German. The Chronicle itself, though it mentions the Gypsies, says nothing about their telling fortunes by whatever means.

[98] Estienne Pasquier, *Les Recherches de la France*, Paris, 1596, book 4, ch. 17, pp. 213H-214A: 'sorcieres qui regardoient és mains des gens, & disoient ce qu'advenu leur estoit, ou à aduenir'. Pasquier says (p. 213C) that this is quoted from 'vn vieux liure en forme de papier iournal, par lequel vn Theologien de Paris ... nous redigea ... tout ce qui aduint de son temps'.

[99] *Dissertatio Philosophica de Cingaris in Disputationem proposita Lipsiae à M. Jacobo Thomasio ... respondente Johanne-Christophoro Schmid ... anno 1652*, Leipzig, 1671, paragraph 66.

[100] Heinrich Moritz Gottlieb Grellmann, *Die Zigeuner: ein historischer Versuch über die Lebensart und Verfassung, Sitten und Schicksahle dieses Volks in Europa, nebst ihrem Ursprunge*, Dessau and Leipzig, 1783. A second corrected and enlarged edition was published in Göttingen in 1787. An English translation of the first edition by Mathew Raper, *Dissertation on the Gypsies*, was published in London in 1787, and a French translation, by M.J., of the second edition, *Histoire des Bohémiens*, in Paris in 1810. The relevant material is in chapter 7 of the first Section, and can be found on pp. 35-6 of the English translation.

[101] Pp. 43-4

[102] P. 72, footnote 1.

A typical example of the post-Second World War references to Gypsy use of Tarot cards occurs in a book by Jean-Paul Clébert of 1961. He remarks that the Gypsies 'never have recourse to palmistry for themselves. It remains an occupation and is addressed exclusively to non-Gypsies, to the *gadjé*', that they 'use the tarot cards as material support for predictions and divination' and 'have used tarots for a very long time'. 'It is difficult to say which pack of cards was first used,' he says, 'between the Egyptian tarot, in which Solomon, Moses and Judas reigned, and the Marseilles tarot, whose symbols are occidental, the Gypsies have been able to make their own choice.' Clébert must have seen a cartomantic pack of the 'Biblical' type witnessed to by Aldegonde Perenna in her booklet of 1826, labelled 'Tarots égyptiens', and had taken the label seriously. His next sentence explodes the thesis that the Gypsies introduced the Tarot pack into Europe: 'it does not look,' he says, 'as though they had an original pack of cards of their own.' He goes on to describe 'the standard way of drawing the tarots, the one in common use among Gypsy fortune-tellers'. Having done so, he adds a comment which, although he does not realise it, tells us plainly from what source this ancient Gypsy tradition is derived: 'this method', he informs us, 'is called the *Etteilla*.'[103]

More sophisticated is Walter Starkie, whose book, *In Sara's Tents*, published in 1953, has an appendix on the Tarot pack, which cites Vaillant, de Gébelin, Colocci and a number of occultist writers. In this appendix, he remarks that Gypsies love to bamboozle gorgios (non-Gypsies) by describing the Tarot pack as the last surviving book of the ancient Egyptians. In the main text, Starkie recounts the employment of Tarot cards to tell fortunes by a Mme Cassandra in Provence. 'You won't find Tarot cards in every Gypsy fair,' Mme Cassandra tells him, 'for not many *voyantes* have ever seen them in their lives.' She informs him that the pack she is using was given her by her mother, who used it for fifty years for fortune-telling: 'When I was a child in Temesvar, my mother used to teach me the prophecies on these very cards.'[104] We have no warrant at all to doubt Mr Starkie's truthfulness; but we cannot be sure that he is not one of those gorgios who gets bamboozled.

In any case, there is no call to dispute that in this century some Gypsies tell fortunes by means of Tarot cards: if you made or supplemented your living by fortune-telling, and then discovered among your clients a widespread belief that a particular pack of cards possessed magical properties, and had long been used by you and your people to tell fortunes, would you not live up to that belief, encourage it and perhaps reinforce it with fanciful tales? The question is not whether the Tarot pack and its use in cartomancy are now peculiarly associated with the Gypsies: it is whether the Gypsy use of that pack is the cause or the effect of the widespread belief in their use of it. The belief was first expressed in 1781, and began to gain currency after 1854: apart from the one dubious instance of Vaillant's Iana, I have been unable to find any single concrete piece of evidence for the truth of the belief from before the second half of the twentieth century. I think that the truth of the matter is probably best summarised by Martin Block, from whose German original of 1936 an English translation was published in 1938 under the title *Gypsies*, when he says that Gypsy women 'do not … tell fortunes among themselves, but with a non-Gypsy before them … they make a good attempt at revealing such of fate's secrets as are written in the eyes, the features or the hands of their clients. The telling of fortunes from the noise in a sea-shell, from coffee grounds or from cards is practised in places where people are more ready to attribute secret powers to things than to persons.'[105] Gypsy use of the Tarot pack reflects, not their own, but their clients', belief in its divinatory powers.

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[103] J.-P. Clébert, *The Gypsies*, translated by Charles Duff, London, 1963, pp. 119-20: the original was published as *Les Tziganes* in Grenoble in 1961.

[104] Op. cit., pp. 292-3: the whole encounter with Mme Cassandra occupies pp. 288-99. Mme Cassandra's long discourse on the Tarot pack, pp. 294-8, matches very exactly the words of Vaillant in *Les Rômes*: 'these three branches of the human race ... discovered the origin of man in the Zodiac which they called Tantara or Tarot ... the twelve tables of the Law of Moses and of Romulus, wherein are written the Ten Commandments of Manu, God of Buddha, and of Manoel, God of David ... the Wise Men of the three races ... created the science of astronomy ... Our Book of the Tarot has three mystical numbers which guide us in its interpretation – the numbers three, four and seven – and there are four colours which are the four aspects of the seasons. And each colour has twice seven cards, which correspond to the days and nights of the week. There are nine cards and one ace of each suit. These nine cards ... signify the nine months of gestation, both astral and human', etc. Every single one of these remarks can be precisely paralleled in *Les Rômes*: compare, for example, 'les douze tables de la loi de Moïse et de Romulus, où sont écrits les dix commandements de *Manu*, dieu de *Buddha*, ou de *Manoel*, dieu de *David*' (p. 38). On the assumption that Mr Starkie has reported her words correctly, we can only suppose that she had committed large parts of *Les Rômes* to memory; though it is surprising that Mr Starkie, who knew that book, failed to notice the similarity.

The thesis of a special connection of the Gypsies with Tarot cards has a life only in symbiosis with the other myth, that those cards are cartomantic in origin. If Tarot cartomancy were really an ancient tradition among the Gypsies, we should expect testimony to its existence, not only from before the nineteenth century, but also in parts of the world, such as Spain, or England until recently, in which the Tarot pack has been unknown among the general population; and this is exactly what we do not find. It is striking that, apart from Clébert, the few writers on the Gypsies who mention Tarot cards all acknowledge their dependence on de Gébelin and on Vaillant. But what finally overthrows the theory is its failure to explain who made the cards and how. In his preposterous book on the Tarot pack as used by the Gypsies, *The Painted Caravan* (1954), Basil Ivan Rákóczi tells us that the Gypsy 'evolved the plan of a set of pasteboard cards, few in number, which could easily be concealed about his person. These would pass as the objects for a game of chance, should they be discovered … Into these cards the Gypsy's whole stock of emblematic wisdom and his secret science of numbers were condensed. They held, under veils, astrological, alchemical and necromantic keys, which only he knew how to use. These cards taught at one and the same time, through their symbols, the highest philosophy known to the wise and the darkest arts known to the black magician'.[106] This sounds like a very thorough case of the bamboozlement of a gorgio, but it does raise the pertinent question: if the Gypsies brought Tarot cards to Europe, of what material did they make them, and why and when did the tradition of cardmaking die out amongst them? It is easy enough to imagine a Gypsy stuffing a pack of cards into his jacket; but, in the fifteenth century, paper was a relatively expensive material; hand-painted cards are slow and costly to produce, and ones printed by wood block demand a workshop that is not so readily concealed. 'We have only the Gypsy's word for it,' Rákóczi admits,[107] 'that the symbols in our surviving, mutilated, sentimentalised or otherwise travestied (Tarot) cards derive directly from those he carried into Western Europe.' We might place more reliance on this assurance if even one or two specimens of Gypsy Tarot cards could be produced: but who has ever seen such a thing? Even if the Gypsies only disseminated the Tarot pack to different parts of Europe after it had been invented by others, they must themselves have produced the cards; and, if so, where are any Gypsy packs to be found? When Mme Cassandra admitted that few Gypsy *voyantes* had ever seen a Tarot pack, she gave the game away: the dependence, in this matter, is of Gypsy upon gorgio, and not the other way about.

(iv) *In other countries*

The ideas of Court de Gébelin were quickly reproduced in some other countries. For instance, in 1782 a literary magazine in Göttingen carried an anonymous article on the origin and meaning of Tarok cards, which began by remarking that many of the readers will have often played Tarok, without its ever having occurred to them that the cards are nothing but allegorical pictures, and went on to expound de Gébelin's theories, only one year after their first publication.[108] In Italy, the same Mgr Antonio

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[105] Martin Block, *Gypsies*, translated by B. Kuczynski and D. Taylor, London, 1938, p. 161. The original was published as *Zigeuner*, Leipzig, 1936.

[106] B.I. Rákóczi, *The Painted Caravan*, the Hague, 1954, pp. 14-15.

[107] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[108] 'Ueber den Ursprung und die Bedeutung der Tarok-Charten', in *Göttingisches Magazin der Wissenschaften und Litteratur*, 1782, pp. 348-77.

Dragoni who supplied Count Leopoldo Cicognara with a probably spurious quotation about Tarot cards painted by Antonio Cicognara in 1484, and amassed a great collection of forged documents relating to the Dark Ages, became an enthusiastic supporter of de Gébelin's theories, which he expounded in an Almanach of Cremona for 1814; it was very likely from him that Count Cicognara learned of them, and he gave them much wider currency in his book *Memorie spettanti alla Storia della Calcografia* of 1831. In Germany, again, Johann Scheible of Stuttgart published in 1857 a *Theoretischer und praktischer Unterricht über das Büch Thot*, with illustrations of all the cards of Grand Etteilla I and an account of Etteilla's theories and fortune-telling method.[109] In Britain, the first intimation of de Gébelin's ideas was given by Samuel Weller Singer's great book, *Researches into the History of Playing Cards*, published in 1816; one of the many appendices to this work reproduced de Gébelin's essay on the Tarot pack, with that of de M.***, but the text of Singer's book did not favour much credence for de Gébelin's views. A more sympathetic view of de Gébelin's work was not expressed until 1865, in *The History of Playing Cards* by E.S. Taylor, who had taken such ideas from Boiteau d'Ambly. But none of this is of much importance. Despite the excitement which de Gébelin's theories obviously generated in some minds, all these writers, with the exception of Scheible, were in intention serious historians, and it is probable that the patent absurdity of the theories would have caused them to be quickly forgotten, had it not been for the dissemination of the neo-occultist teachings of Éliphas Lévi and his school. This it was, rather than the works of de Gébelin and Etteilla, that caused the belief in the cartomantic origin and esoteric meaning of the Tarot pack to take hold outside France.

The occultist revival took place in France from the 1850s onwards. In Britain the original impetus was independent of the French movement, and centred round the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, familiarly referred to as the 'Soc. Ros.'. This, though not itself a Masonic Lodge, was a Masonic group in that membership of it was open only to Freemasons. It was founded in 1866 by Robert Wentworth Little (1840-1878), who was its Supreme Magus until his early death; Lord Lytton (1802-1873), who, as Bulwer Lytton, had in 1842 published a novel, *Zanoni*, with a Rosicrucian theme, became its Grand Patron in 1871. Éliphas Lévi met Lytton on both of his visits to England in 1854 and 1861, and W.W. Westcott later claimed that Little had been a student of Lévi's works; but the Soc. Ros. was very little influenced by the French school. Rather, although England had an ancient connection with Rosicrucianism in the persons of John Dee (1527-1608) and Robert Fludd (1574-1637), the immediate spiritual ancestry of the Soc. Ros. appears to have been German. Its nine grades seem to have been borrowed from a German Masonic-Rosicrucian group founded in about 1770, to which Mesmer had belonged, the Sublime, Most Ancient, Genuine and Honourable Society of the Golden and Rosy Cross; the names of these grades were also given by Paul Christian in his *Histoire de la magie* of 1870, without any indication of where he had taken them from. In founding the Soc. Ros., Little had the assistance of Kenneth Mackenzie (1833-1886), who claimed to have been initiated into a Rosicrucian brotherhood by German adepts. Mackenzie did not himself join the Soc. Ros. until 1872, in part because until 1870 he was not a member of a recognised Masonic Lodge, and therefore was not qualified to do so; he was its Assistant Secretary from 1874 to 1875, and then resigned from the Society.[110]

Despite all this, it is true of Britain, as of all other countries, that the growth of modern occultism took place under the influence of the French school. Occultist theories and practices have always the same few sources. Theosophy indeed introduced a new source, the Hindu religion, and, since the Second World War, inspiration has been drawn from Zen; but the Oriental religions did not become a source for most Western occultists until well into the twentieth century. What distinguished the French neo-occultism of the second half of the nineteenth century from all previous brands was its incorporation of the Tarot into the pot-pourri of occultist sources: the presence of this new ingredient is the criterion by which one may distinguish between occultism deriving from the nineteenth-century French school and that which was independent of it. Everywhere the vogue for Tarot cartomancy is a barometer for the severity of the onset of the new wave of occultism spreading out from France; and Britain was the first country to be affected by it. Doubtless this was because an indigenous occultist movement already flourished there, at first owing little to the parallel movement in France: for, despite the contacts with Éliphas Lévi, the earlier phase in Britain, from the 1850s until the late 1880s, was not markedly influenced by his teachings, and the Tarot played no part in the occultism of that period. To this Kenneth Mackenzie was an exception. When he paid a visit to Éliphas Lévi in Paris in 1861, he discussed with him, among many other subjects, 'the occult game of Tarot', in which he said he had been interested for some time, probably as a result of reading Lévi's books; in 1873 he published in the journal of the Soc. Ros. an article describing at length his encounter with Lévi twelve years before. Moreover, according to Ellic Howe, Mackenzie actually wrote a book entitled *The Game of Tarot, Archaeologically and Symbolically Considered*, and issued a prospectus for it, but never in fact published it.[111] In a sense, therefore, Mackenzie was the originator of Tarot occultism in Britain; but the only direct effect of his interest in the subject was to arouse that of W.W. Westcott, who played an important part in our later history. During the first two decades after the foundation of the Soc. Ros., Mackenzie's fascination with the Tarot went unshared by his colleagues; it was not until the 1880s that the Tarot mystique was made an integral ingredient of British occultism, which thus fell into line with the brand of magic propagated by the French school.

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[109] This is Part 14 of his *Kleiner Wunder-Schauplatz der geheimen Wissenschaften*, an occult series.

[110] For the grades of the German Society of the Golden and Rosy Cross, see A.E. Waite, *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*, London, 1924, p. 446, and Richard Cavendish, *A History of Magic*, London, 1977, p. 127; for their adoption by the Soc. Ros. and, later, the Golden Dawn, see Cavendish, pp. 139 and 144 and Francis King, *Magic: the Western Tradition*, London, 1975, p. 24. For Christian's list of grades, see Paul Christian, *The History and Practice of Magic*, vol. I, p. 125 (book II, ch. 5). For Mesmer's membership of the German Society, see J.M. Roberts, *Mythology of the Secret Societies*, London, 1972, p. 102. The facts about the German Society are somewhat obscure; since it is peripheral to our history, I have not tried to unravel them. Roberts says that an Order of the Gold and Rosy Cross was founded in Germany in about 1750, and spawned a new rite of Rosicrucian freemasonry; Cavendish agrees, giving the foundation date of the Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross, as in the 1750s, and that of its offshoot, the Sublime, etc., Society, as 1767. Waite, p. 440, gives the date as 1777; but by February 1778 Mesmer had arrived in Paris (see R. Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France*, Cambridge, Mass., 1968, p. 48), so it was probably earlier. For a statement by a member of the Soc. Ros., William Carpenter, who knew the works of Éliphas Lévi, that very few other members shared that knowledge, see Ellic Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, London, 1972, p. 32.

The introduction of Tarot occultism into Britain is largely bound up with the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, an occultist brotherhood to which, at one time or another, a number of distinguished people belonged, and through which the ideas of the French neo-occultists were transmitted to Britain. The Order was founded in 1888 jointly by Dr William Robert Woodman, Dr William Wynn Westcott and Samuel Lidell Mathers: together they became the Three Chiefs of the new Order. All three were Masons and members of the Soc. Ros.; Woodman (1828-1891) was a much older man than the other two, and since 1878 Supreme Magus of the Soc. Ros. The Order was organised on the same system of grades as that which the Soc. Ros. had taken from the German Society of the Golden and Rosy Cross, with a new preliminary grade of Neophyte; in the Golden Dawn, these grades were usually referred to by means of a curious set of numerical appellations. The first five grades were 0° = 0° Neophyte, 1° = 10° Zelator, 2° = 9° Theoricus, 3° = 8° Practicus and 4° = 7° Philosophicus. To be admitted from any grade to the next, it was necessary to pass an examination in magical doctrine and to undergo a ceremony conducted in one of the Order's temples, such as the Isis-Urania Temple in London; temples were also set up in Bradford and Weston-super-Mare, and, later, in Edinburgh, Paris and Chicago. Every member, upon admission to the Order, selected a Latin motto, which served as his name within the Order. Members of grades higher than 4° = 7° belonged to an inner Order, established in 1892, the Ordo Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis (the Order of the Red Rose and the Golden Cross), which had a separate organisation but was subject to the same supreme authorities, the Three Chiefs. This inner Order comprised three grades, 5° = 6° Adeptus Minor, 6° = 5° Adeptus Major and 7° = 4° Adeptus Exemptus; the Three Chiefs themselves were of grade 7° = 4°. The system provided for three further grades, 8°

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[111] See Frater Kenneth R.H. Mackenzie, VI°, 'Philosophical and Cabalistic Magic: a Narrative', in *The Rosicrucian and Red Cross*, vol. II, no. 20, May 1873, pp. 27-43. The 'VI°' refers to the grade that Mackenzie then held in the Societas Rosicruciana. The article can more easily be found in Francis King, *Ritual Magic in England*, London, 1970, pp. 28-38, and is extensively quoted in McIntosh, op. cit., pp. 117-22. for Mackenzie's book on the Tarot, see the work by Ellic Howe cited in footnote 110, p. 30, fn. 2.

= 3° Magister Templi, 9° = 2° Magus and 10° = 1° Ipsissimus, of which the last and highest was an innovation of the Golden Dawn; but, until after the fragmentation of the Golden Dawn into hostile factions, a process which began in 1900, no ordinary human members of the Order ever attained these last three grades. It was the official teaching of the Order, imparted to initiates, and firmly believed by most of them, that there existed 'secret Chiefs', belonging to these higher grades and forming a third Order, but living on a higher plane of being and communicating, by magical means, only with the highest adepts.

In an order of this kind, an individual can be admitted to any grade only by someone with authority to do so, one who has already been initiated and has become an adept of a higher grade. Hence, in theory, no one can simply set up such an order and begin admitting applicants to successive grades: he has to present some entitlement to do so. There has, in other words, to be a requirement analogous to that of the apostolic succession in Christian theology; though, while it is clear from what fount the Christian episcopate claims to derive its priesthood, the source from which the Hermetic and Rosicrucian orders trace their magical lineage is decidedly obscure.

The entitlement to set up the Order of the Golden Dawn was supplied by Dr Wynn Westcott, who, like the great philosopher Gottlob Frege, whom he in no other way resembled, lived from 1848 to 1925. Westcott was a medical man, and lived a kind of double life. He served as a coroner for many years, and wrote a medical treatise and one on the causes and prevention of suicide; but apparently his medical colleagues were unaware of his magical activities, which absorbed his leisure time, although, indeed, he published on the subject under his own name. Westcott showed to Woodman and to Mathers a manuscript written in an alchemical cypher, purporting to be of considerable antiquity and detailing occult rituals; according to A.E. Waite, they were 'replete with Tarot symbolism of the inferior, magical kind', though I am afraid I am unable to explain the distinction between inferior and superior Tarot symbolism. Westcott also showed his colleagues some letters written in German by a Fräulein Sprengel, a member of a German Orden der goldenen Dämmerung, authorising him to set up a daughter order in Britain, and appointing him and two other Chiefs to be selected by him to the grade 7° = 4° (Adeptus Exemptus): these were the title-deeds of the Order of the Golden Dawn. It emerges clearly from Mr Ellic Howe's discussion in his book on the Order[112] that the cypher MSS., which Westcott claimed had once been in the hands of Éliphas Lévi, had in fact been forged by Westcott or by someone else, using old paper and brown ink; worse yet, Howe establishes beyond doubt that there never was any Fräulein Sprengel or Orden der goldenen Dämmerung, and that the letters purportedly from her had also been forged at Westcott's behest. It was on this cracked base that the Order of the Golden Dawn was founded. The brand of magic to which it subscribed was that of Éliphas Lévi and his followers – the familiar blend of Hermetism, the Cabala and the newly created Tarot mystique. The Order purported to be in the direct line of succession from the original Rosicrucian brotherhood, and Rosicrucian symbolism was prominent: the grandest of all the Order's initiation rituals, that of admission to the grade of 5° = 6° Adeptus Minor, and so to the inner Order, took place in a replica of the tomb of Christian Rosenkreutz, the mythical founder of the Rosicrucian brotherhood, who supposedly lived from 1378 to 1484, and whose incorrupt body was said to have been discovered when his tomb was opened in 1604; Westcott or Mathers played the part of Christian Rosenkreutz in the ceremony. The ceremony further involved a re-enactment of the Crucifixion of Christ, the initiate being bound, but not nailed, to a cross.[113] The Order was nothing if not eclectic in its sources, however: its temples were all dedicated to ancient Egyptian gods. As a member of the Order ascended through the various grades, he was progressively instructed in magical doctrine and the techniques of magical practices. The Tarot symbols played a large part in the teaching, rituals and practices of the Golden Dawn. While bound to the cross in the 5° = 6° ceremony, the initiate took an oath not to reveal 'our modes of Tarot and other Divination, of Clairvoyance, of Astral projection', etc., etc.; having been admitted to the inner Order, the new adept had to equip himself with four Elemental Weapons, corresponding to the four suits of the Tarot pack, a Cup for Water, a Dagger for Air, a Disc or Pentacle for Earth and a Wand for Fire.[114] The 5° = 6° ceremony, and those for higher grades within the inner Order, were entirely composed by Mathers; the ceremonies for admission to the lower grades, in the outer Order, were written by him on the basis of the summaries contained in the cypher MS.

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[112] Ellic Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, London, 1972. To this book I owe most of my information on the subject, and it should be consulted for most of the events narrated in this section for which there is no specific reference to another source. I also found very helpful Francis King's oddly titled *Ritual Magic in England*, London, 1970, which is good on the later phases and carries the story beyond 1923, the point at which Howe's book stops. King's title is odd because Edinburgh figures quite prominently in the history. A.E. Waite, *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*, London, 1924, p. 584, discusses the cypher documents, and gives as his conclusion that, notwithstanding the faded ink, they date from after 1880; it is from here that Waite's remark about inferior Tarot symbolism is quoted.

[113] Richard Cavendish, *A History of Magic*, London, 1977, p. 144, and Ellic Howe, op. cit., pp. 77-88; the latter gives a very detailed description of this ceremony.

The first work to introduce the British public to Tarot occultism was a selection from the writings of Éliphas Lévi made and translated by A.E. Waite, and with an introductory essay by him, published in London in 1886 under the title *The Mysteries of Magic*. In this, Waite, who was later to become a prominent member of the Golden Dawn, which he joined in 1891, lapsing in 1892 and rejoining in 1896, included an extensive section concerning the Tarot, taken largely from the *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie*. The first original publication in Britain concerning Tarot occultism and cartomancy was by S.L. Mathers (1854-1918). Mathers was a very different character from Westcott: unlike him, he had no career outside magic, and was persistently short of funds; he appears to have supported himself principally by sponging from others. He pretended to a Scottish ancestry, and early in life inserted the name 'MacGregor' before his surname, sometimes with a hyphen; in France he called himself the comte de Glenstrae. According to Cavendish, he knew Mme Blavatsky, and taught magic to Anna Kingsford (1846-1888), who founded a Hermetic Society in 1884 and attempted to use magic to kill vivisectionists, claiming to have succeeded in making Pasteur ill. As S.L. MacGregor Mathers, he published in 1887 *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, a translation of the *Kabbala Denudata* (1677-84) of Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636-1689), and in 1888 a booklet, *The Tarot: its Occult Signification, Use in Fortune-Telling and Method of Play*, which is still in print in an undated edition published in New York. On the testimony of A.E. Waite, this booklet was designed to accompany an imported pack of Tarot cards, perhaps those sold by the bookseller Robert Fryar of Bath.[115]

Mathers refers to de Gébelin, Etteilla, Éliphas Lévi, Paul Christian and Vaillant, and borrows ideas from all of them. He follows de Gébelin in ascribing an ancient Egyptian origin to the Tarot pack, associates the Hebrew letters with the twenty-two major cards according to the system of Lévi, with 'The Foolish Man', numbered 0, inserted between 20 and 21, numbers the suit cards from 22 to 77 according to the system of Etteilla, assigns occult meanings to the major cards taken, for the most part, from Christian, lists divinatory meanings for all seventy-eight cards borrowed from Etteilla, and describes various cartomantic methods again largely due to Etteilla. His own contributions are as follows. He informs us that Gringonneur – a painter who made some playing cards for Charles VI of France in 1392, and to whom the Tarot cards at the Bibliothèque Nationale were once erroneously attributed – was an astrologer and Cabalist, a wholly improbable statement for which he gives no evidence. Secondly, he proposes a new derivation for the word 'tarot', namely from ancient Egyptian *tāru* = 'to consult' (another word not found in Wallis Budge's dictionary). Finally, and most important, he largely established the occultist nomenclature of the Tarot cards in English, calling no. 1 the Magician, no. 2 the High Priestess and no. 5 the Hierophant, and the remainder of the triumphs more or less by their correct names. He does not use the terms 'major Arcana' and 'minor Arcana', which later became usual among occultists, and, following Paul Christian, he calls the Batons suit 'Sceptres'; later, 'Wands' was to become more popular in occultist circles. He took a new step, however, in calling the Coins suit 'Pentacles', and in this was followed by all occultists. It came to be the regular practice to put five-pointed stars on the suit-signs of the Coins suit in cartomantic packs, and to label them 'Pentacles': but, when Mathers was writing, there was no pack that had this feature, and it is at first puzzling where he got this idea from. I think that the answer is to be found by looking at Waite's book of selections from Éliphas Lévi. Lévi had been very fond of the word *pantacle*, meaning an occult symbolic design or emblem; and, since he followed de M.*** and Etteilla in regarding the Coins as representing magical talismans, he sometimes applied the word *pantacles* to the cards of that suit.[116] In his translations from Lévi, Waite simply left *pantacles* unaltered as 'pantacles', a word unrecognised by the Oxford English Dictionary. Lévi had not meant by *pantacle* a five-pointed star, for which he used the word *pentagramme*; but it seems that Mathers must have misunderstood the word 'pantacles' in Waite's version of Lévi, as well he might. And that, apparently, is how the five-pointed star got into cartomantic Tarot packs.

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[114] Francis King, *Magic: the Western Tradition*, London, 1975, p. 25, and Ellic Howe, op. cit., pp. 86 and 89.

[115] See A.E. Waite, *The Key to the Tarot*, London, 1972, p. 161, and Ellic Howe, op. cit., p. 30, fn. 1. For Mathers and Anna Kingsford, see R. Cavendish, *A History of Magic*, p. 143, and Howe, pp. 39-40. *The Kabbalah Unveiled* was reprinted in New York in 1968.

Other translations from the French occultists rapidly appeared, including, in 1892, one by A.P. Morton of Papus's *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, with the title mistranslated as *The Tarot of the Bohemians* (it should, of course, be *The Tarot of the Gypsies*). A second edition of this translation, revised by Waite, but with the title unaltered, and with an extensive Preface by him, came out in 1910; meanwhile Waite had in 1896 brought out a translation of Lévi's *Le Dogme et rituel de la haute magie*, with a Biographical Preface by himself, under the title *Transcendental Magic: its Doctrine and Ritual*. In the same year, 1896, Westcott, whose interest in the Tarot had been stimulated by a correspondence with Kenneth Mackenzie in 1879, produced a translation of a hitherto unpublished manuscript by Éliphas Lévi, under the title *The Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum, interpreted by the Tarot Trumps*. This runs through the twenty-two 'keys' of the Tarot in sequence, attaching to each some often loosely connected reflections on magical topics. Westcott contributed a Preface, saying that the true attributions of numbers and (Hebrew) letters to the twenty-two cards 'are known to but a few students, members of the Hermetic Schools'; those given by Lévi, Christian and Papus 'are incorrect, presumably by design'. He adds that he 'has seen a manuscript page of cypher, about 150 years old' which gives the correct attributions. He also added a running commentary to Lévi's text, describing each card and giving interpretations from other works of Lévi and from Paul Christian. About the Hanged Man he says that it 'is the most closely veiled of all the Tarot hieroglyphics. Its real meaning is now known to but very few; there is the gravest doubt whether Lévi knew it himself. Papus ... gives a clearly faulty explanation. Neither Etteilla nor Court de Gébelin grasped the hidden meaning.' Westcott does not, however, choose to reveal this secret, any more than he had revealed the 'correct' assignment of letters.

The tone of mystification informing the remarks quoted from Westcott is entirely typical of the Golden Dawn writers. Éliphas Lévi had, no doubt, owed his great success to the fact that he professed to conceal nothing, indeed to reveal secrets never before disclosed. And, despite the growth of secret societies, the French occultist writers of the 1880s and 1890s had largely followed Lévi in this. But what use is a secret society if it does not hoard secrets not to be divulged to the profane public without? And what pleasure is there in knowing a secret if you do not hint to outsiders that you have it but cannot reveal it? The inevitable effect of the revival of the secret societies and occult orders, with their grades of initiation, was once more to make magical theory a mystery which its adepts dare not betray to the uninitiated; and so the writings of the members of the Golden Dawn are full of dark hints about a secret tradition. The trouble with this technique is that people enjoy being tantalised for only just so long; after a time, they become bored and take no further notice.

By 1896 the Order of the Golden Dawn was beginning to run into trouble. In 1889 or 1890 Mathers had obtained a job at the private Museum of the tea merchant Frederick Horniman through the good offices of his daughter Annie Horniman, a prominent member of the Golden Dawn and a close friend of Mathers.[117] In 1890 Mathers married Mina (later

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[116] See, e.g., *Transcendental Magic*, p. 386.

[117] Annie Horniman (1860-1937) had two great interests, the occult and the theatre: she is more famous for the latter. In 1894, unknown to him, she financed the first production of Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*; she founded the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, in 1904, and engaged in pioneer work in modern repertory as owner of the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, from 1908 to 1921.

Moina) Bergson (1865-1928), a member of the Golden Dawn from 1888 and the sister of the celebrated French philosopher Henri Bergson. In 1891 Mathers was dismissed from his post at the Horniman Museum, possibly because Horniman had discovered about Mather's magical activities. At the end of that year, Woodman, the eldest of the Three Chiefs, died, and Mathers assumed sole supreme authority over the Golden Dawn, which Westcott, the third Chief, who became Supreme Magus of the Soc. Ros. in succession to Woodman, does not seem to have opposed. In 1892 Mathers followed his wife to Paris, where she had gone to study art, and settled there; he subsisted for the next four years on remittances sent by the ever generous Annie Horniman, and controlled the affairs of the Order from afar. In Paris he founded an Ahathoor Temple of the Order; it was joined by Eugène Jacob (Ély Star), the astrologer, and his wife, the cartomancer. It was also joined by Dr Gérard Encausse (Papus); despite his contemptuous dismissal in *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* of Mathers's booklet on the Tarot, he could not resist acquiring membership in yet another secret Order. By 1896 there were murmurings by the London members against Mathers, in part because of his high-handed dealings with them, and perhaps in part also because of his encouragement of Dr Edward Berridge, a member since 1889 and an advocate of sexual magic. Mathers attempted to reassert his authority by a Manifesto in which he claimed to be in touch with Secret Chiefs of the Order, whom he took to be 'human and living upon this earth, but possessing terrible superhuman powers', and to be transmitting their instructions. In July 1896, a disillusioned Annie Horniman sent Mathers her last remittance; in December of that year, to her bitter chagrin, he expelled her from the Order.

Things came to a head early in 1900. The subsequently notorious Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) had joined the Order in November 1898, and had reached the grade 4° = 7°; but the London members refused to admit him to the next grade and so to the inner Order. He therefore went to Paris, where, in January 1900, Mathers initiated him as a 5° = 6°; but, on his return, his initiation was not recognised. At this point Mathers made a disastrous blunder. Fearing that the rebellious members would invoke the authority of Dr Westcott, he tried in February to discredit the latter by revealing, in a letter to another member, Florence Farr, that Westcott had forged the cypher MS. and the letters from Fräulein Sprengel. Florence Farr was a well-known actress who was separated from her husband, Edward Emery, another actor, and had love affairs with both George Bernard Shaw and W.B. Yeats. An exact contemporary of Annie Horniman (both were born in 1860), she had joined the Order in the same year, 1890, as had both Annie Horniman and Yeats, and had come to play an extremely important role in it. Despite Mathers's subsequent protests that his letter had been confidential, she felt impelled to communicate its contents to the other members. This provoked a scandal, since, if the accusation against Westcott were not a calumny, the whole basis, not only of Mathers's own authority, but of the entire Order, was destroyed. A committee of enquiry was convened, which Mathers ineffectually 'annulled'; meanwhile, Dr Westcott kept silence, taking no sides, making no confession and issuing no denial. Crowley now concocted a plan, with Mathers's approval, for bringing the rebellious members to heel by interrogating them and expelling those who would not accept Mathers's leadership and acknowledge that the origin of the instruction they had received sprang from a pure source; they were thus in effect to be called on to affirm belief in those title-deeds of the Order which Mathers himself had called in question. To this end, Crowley physically occupied the Vault of the Adepts of the Second Order at 36, Blythe Road, from which, after four days, he was ejected by three members of the Order – one of them W.B. Yeats, the most distinguished of all the members – with the help of a policeman. The Second Order thereupon withdrew recognition from Mathers as its Chief, and severed all connection with him.

These events took place in April 1900. The issue about the legitimacy of its foundation unresolved and ignored, the Order was now split into two rival factions, since the Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh remained loyal to Mathers, as did a small body of London members, headed by Dr Edward Berridge, a sinister character who had goaded and insulted Annie Horniman at the time of Mathers's quarrel with her, when most of the London members had given her their sympathy. Dr Westcott, still terrified of Mathers's power to expose him, adhered to the Berridge faction.

Meanwhile the main group, in control of the Isis-Urania Temple, reinstated Annie Horniman; W.B. Yeats became Imperator of the Temple, and for a short time the leading member. At the General Meeting of 1901, however, Annie Horniman and Yeats launched an attack on various secret groups within the Order, such as one called the Sphere run by Florence Farr, but were voted down and resigned from their posts in the Order. A new calamity now occurred, the Horos scandal: two impostors, who had deceived Mathers and some other members, were brought to trial for a rape carried out in the course of a bogus Golden Dawn initiation. The public notoriety thus unfairly inflicted on the Golden Dawn was too much for many of the members to bear; a great many, including Florence Farr, resigned in 1902. Control was then assumed by a triumvirate consisting of Percy Bullock, Dr R.W. Felkin and J.W. Brodie-Innes. Annie Horniman, becoming increasingly neurotic, kept demanding public vindications from them; they tried to comply, but nothing would satisfy her, and she resigned from the Order in 1903, thus bringing her career in magic to a close, though not her interest in the occult. At the General Meeting in the same year, A.E. Waite gained control of the Order, and set about revising its rituals in a Christian direction. This was so little to the taste of some of the members that it provoked a further split, Felkin, Brodie-Innes and Yeats setting up a new group called the Stella Matutina, which had an Amoun Temple in London, and of which Yeats remained a member until 1923. Waite's Order of the Golden Dawn lasted until 1914, when he dissolved it, founding a new group called the Fellowship of the True Rosy Cross in 1916. Brodie-Innes came to repent the rebellion against Mathers, with whom he was reconciled in 1908; acknowledging Mathers's authority, he revived the Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh, changing the name of the faction loyal to Mathers and centred on that Temple to Alpha et Omega. Crowley, Mathers's ally in the original dispute, indeed the *casus belli*, himself quarrelled with Mathers in 1904; in 1907, he founded his own Order, the Astrum Argentinum, using for it the Golden Dawn rituals. These he published in his periodical *The Equinox*; in 1909 Mathers brought a legal action against him to prevent him from doing so, but it failed. The Astrum Argentinum lasted until 1914, when Crowley went to the United States, from where he conducted anti-British propaganda during the War; but he had by then become more interested in the Ordo Templi Orientis, a German society founded in 1903 which practised sexual magic and of whose British section he had become the head in 1912. After the death of her husband in Paris in 1918, Moina Mathers returned to Britain and took charge of the Alpha et Omega group, which was joined in 1919 by 'Dion Fortune' (1891-1946), whose real name was Violet Mary Firth and who was an admirer of Aleister Crowley. The two women quarrelled, however, and conducted a magical battle with one another, the chief weapon in which appears to have been the manifestation of demonic cats.[118] Dion Fortune then broke away, and concentrated upon her own organisation, the Fraternity of the Inner Light, which she had founded in 1922.

In all this flurry, Arhur Edward Waite, who was to die in 1942 in the London blitz, continued his career as a writer on occult subjects, and came to be the principal British exponent of the Tarot mystique. Born in Brooklyn in 1857 of an English mother and an American father, who died within a year of his birth, he lived in England from infancy. In 1910 he wrote *The Key to the Tarot*, to accompany a pack in *art nouveau* style designed to his instructions by Pamela Coleman-Smith. To the best of my belief, this was the first cartomantic pack, other than Etteilla's and all those deriving from it, to have contained the suit cards, the so-called 'minor Arcana'. (Papus mentions one designed by the cardmaker Wattilliaux, curiously named the *jeu de la princesse Tarot*, which, he says, reproduces the minor Arcana very correctly; but I have not been able to trace this, and do not know whether it was intended as cartomantic. Wattilliaux specialised in children's card games, of the type of our Happy Families.) On the numeral cards of Miss Coleman-Smith's pack, the suit-signs are not arranged regularly, but are incorporated into a picture, in the manner of the Sola-Busca *tarocchi*.

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[118] See R. Cavendish, *A History of Magic*, London, 1977, p. 157 and Francis King, *Ritual Magic in England*, London, 1970, pp. 143-9. Cavendish, p. 145, gives Moina Mathers's dates as 1865-1928; King does not give them, but states, p. 149, that in 1929 Dion Fortune accused Mrs Mathers of having murdered, by psychic means, an Alpha et Omega member, Miss Netta Fornario, who had been found dead in mysterious circumstances, so Cavendish's dates may be wrong.

As in *The Key to the Tarot*, the suits of Batons and Coins are named Wands and Pentacles, and, in the latter, pentagrams appear on the suit-signs; Waite thus consciously perpetuated the mistake for which, originally, his erratic translation had been unintentionally responsible. The 'major Arcana' lie somewhere between those of Oswald Wirth and those of the Etteilla-derived packs in the degree of their deviation from traditional designs. Many of them incorporate quite unwarranted occultist features into their designs, frequently ones suggested by Éliphas Lévi. Thus, for instance, the Wheel of Fortune has totally lost its original symbolism, already obscured in the Tarot de Marseille: instead of four men, one at the nadir of his fortunes, one ascending, one at the zenith, and one descending, as the Wheel revolves, we now have a sphinx perched at the top of a wheel not obviously in motion, with the serpent Typhon on the left and the dog Anubis at the right; the wheel itself is inscribed with Lévi's ROTA and with the Divine Name, while at the four corners of the card are the symbols of the four Evangelists. The cards bear Roman numerals from I to XXI, but not Hebrew letters; the suit cards do not carry on the numbering. The pack is, to my taste, a vapid piece of work, but it and copies of it remain extremely popular among those who purchase cartomantic Tarot packs: one could say that it has become the standard pattern for such packs.[119] In his revision of the English translation of Papus's *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, Waite had the impertinence to add a footnote saying that the Tarot de Marseille was no longer extant, and had been 'superseded in all respects' by the pack designed at his instructions; as one of the great classic standard patterns, the Tarot de Marseille is, of course, incapable of being 'superseded'. *The Key to the Tarot*, reprinted in 1972, is still obtainable; in 1911 it was reissued as *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*, with illustrations of Miss Coleman-Smith's cards.

Like most of Waite's work, *The Key to the Tarot* exhibits a deep ambivalence. Waite had the instincts, and to a large extent the temperament, of a genuine scholar; in particular, he had a scholar's squeamishness about making factual assertions unwarranted by the evidence. As Dashiell Hammett remarked in a review of a book by Waite on the Rosicrucians, 'Waite's facts seem always to be facts';[120] pretty nearly, anyhow. Factual errors occur in his writings, of course: but, when they do, they appear due to normal mistakes in a process of rational enquiry, rather than to the unbridled fantasy in which most occultist writers indulge. For this reason, he is highly critical of the works of his fellow-occultists. Indeed, it is hard to avoid suspecting that his critical attitude was not for this reason alone: he was unable to mention any of his neo-occultist colleagues, even one, like Éliphas Lévi, whom he was most anxious to extol, without making some disparaging or sneering comment; he seems actuated by mingled feelings of envy and of superiority. Often, then, in reading him, one can have the illusion of reading a fastidious scholar repelled by the grandiose and irrational pretensions of occultism. But it *is* an illusion: Waite was as enthusiastic and active a member of the Golden Dawn as any, and as committed an occultist as those he subjected to his rebukes. What he gave away openly with one hand, therefore, he took back surreptitiously with the other. In cryptic sentences whose meaning slithers from the mind's grasp, he insinuates that while, at the phenomenal level, the assertions of the occultist writers may be riddled with factual inaccuracies, still, in some profounder sense, which he is not able, because not permitted, fully to convey, their claims are warranted and their statements true. The final outcome of reading him is thus a kind of double vision. He explains clearly why, in purely factual respects, the beliefs of the occultists are unfounded; but one is left to gather that to reject those beliefs, or their inner core, for that reason is to be guilty of superficiality and a disrespect for the secret tradition.

In *The Key to the Tarot*, Waite refutes the wild historical claims of his predecessors, debunking de Gébelin's theory of the Egyptian origin of Tarot cards, ridiculing Etteilla 'the *perruquier*' and affirming that the history of the cards does not extend further back than the fourteenth century and that there is no testimony earlier than de Gébelin either to their use in cartomancy or to the ascription to them of a mystical meaning. In an annotated bibliography to the book, he roundly censures Lévi, Papus and other occultist writers for their uncritical methods and habit of unsupported assertion;[121] in his notes to his translation of Lévi's *Dogme et rituel*, and in his Preface to the translation of Papus's *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, he gives detailed disproofs of their various claims to have discovered allusions to the Tarot in occultist writers before de Gébelin.

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[119] For an illustration, see Kaplan, p. 273. No doubt Waite's perpetuation of the mistake about pentacles was due to its having long been embodied in Golden Dawn ritual symbolism, e.g. in the disc/pentacle Elemental Weapon.

[120] Hammett's review was incorporated into an unfinished novel called 'Tulip', posthumously published in the collection *The Big Knockover*, edited by Lillian Hellman, New York, 1962: see pp. 249-51. The book, *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross* (1924), was Waite's second on the subject.

And yet, save for his refusal to endorse demonstrably false historical claims, his procedure in *The Key to the Tarot* tallies with that of other occultists; he does not want to diminish by a jot the occultist claims for the mystic significance of the Tarot pack. He disparages the use of the cards for divination, which he denies to be their original purpose, and hints that he has some far profounder meaning to impart. He twice declares that there is a secret tradition concerning the Tarot pack, to which he implies that he is privy. He is at the other extreme from Éliphas Lévi, who claimed to have penetrated and to be revealing all mysteries: he seems out to mystify rather than to enlighten, darkly alluding to esoteric knowledge that he may not, and others cannot, communicate. 'The fact remains ... that a secret tradition exists concerning the Tarot, and as there is always the possibility that such minor arcana of the mysteries may be made public with a flourish of trumpets, it will be as well to go before the event and to warn those who are curious in such matters that ... much will remain to be said after any pretended unveiling ... The present work is designed ... to introduce a rectified set of the cards themselves and to tell the unadorned truth concerning them, so far as this is possible in the outer circles. As regards the sequence of symbols, their ultimate and highest meaning ... will be understood by those who have received some part of the secret tradition. As regards the verbal meanings allocated to the more important Trump cards, they are designed to set aside the follies and impostures of past attributions, ... and to take care ... that they are the truth so far as they go. It is regrettable ... that I must confess to certain reservations, but there is a question of honour at issue.'[122] Later, speaking of his 'rectified' Tarot pack, he says, 'For the variations in the symbolism by which the designs have been affected, I alone am responsible. In respect of the Major Arcana, they are sure to occasion criticism among students, actual and imputed. I wish therefore to say ... that I care nothing utterly for any view that may find expression. There is a secret tradition concerning the Tarot, as well as a secret doctrine contained therein; I have followed some part of it without exceeding the limits which are drawn about matters of this kind and belong to the laws of honour. This tradition has two parts, and as one of them has passed into writing it seems to follow that it may be betrayed at any moment, which will not signifiy, because the second ... has not so passed at present and is held by very few indeed. I ask, therefore, to be distinguished from a few writers in recent times who have thought fit to hint that they could say a good deal more if they liked, for we do not speak the same language; but also from any one who ... may say that she or he will tell all, because they have only the accidents and not the essentials necessary for such disclosure ... I have said as much as I can; it is the truth after its own manner, and as much as can be expected or required in those outer circles where the qualifications of special research cannot be expected.'[123]

These excerpts well convey the tone of supercilious superiority common in Waite's writing. It is impossible to draw the distinction he asks for in the second passage: if, in it and in the foregoing one, he is not hinting that he could say a good deal more if he liked, his words bear no sense whatsoever. But when, after all this ambiguous build-up, it comes down to what honour does permit him to say, all that we are given are the standard occultist and divinatory meanings of the cards, together with some methods of telling fortunes with them. His symbolic interpretations have, for the most part, no more basis than the particulars of design of that pack whose production he had directed; and, save for his insinuations that he is in possession of secret knowledge, he is not able, after his castigations of those writers from whom, for the most part, he has borrowed them, to pretend that they have. Other occultists erect their theories on foundations of sand; Waite is unique in first patiently cutting all possible ground from beneath his feet before he starts to build.

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[121] His criticisms of Lévi aroused Aleister Crowley to unbridled fury. In his Preface to *The Mysteries of Magic*, Waite had pointed out that in the *Histoire de la magie* Lévi had contradicted some of the things he had said in the *Dogme et rituel*. Crowley commented, in his Preface to *The Key to the Mysteries*, that the latter work 'represents the high-water mark of the thought of Éliphas Lévi ... He is beginning to see something of the contradiction inherent in the nature of things ... This, and the extraorinarily subtle and delicate irony of which Éliphas Lévi is one of the greatest masters that has ever lived, have baffled the pedantry and stupidity of such commentators as Waite. English has hardly a word to express mental condition of such unfortunates. *Dummheit*, in its strongest German sense, is about the nearest thing to it.' He goes on to say that 'the "contradictions" which leave Waite petulant and bewildered' can be reconciled, but, of course, only on a higher plane.

[122] A.E. Waite, *The Key to the Tarot*, London, 1972, pp. 4-5.

[123] Ibid., pp. 72-4.

Waite twice runs through the twenty-two 'Major Arcana' or 'Trumps Major', the first time principally to report the interpretations of others, repudiating the more fantastic; only about the Hermit – of which he admits Prudence as one, but 'the most negligible', of several meanings – does he expatiate at length. The second list describes in detail the designs in the 'rectified' pack; Waite uses the same names for the cards as Mathers, and places the Fool (no. 0) between the Last Judgment (no. 20) and the World (no. 21). This second list also gives his own preferred interpretations of the symbolic meanings: a characteristic remark is, 'One of his editors' – Westcott is meant – 'suggests that Éliphas Lévi did not know the meaning' of the Hanged Man, 'which is unquestionable – nor did the editor himself'; his own explanation is 'that it expresses the relation, in one of its aspects, between the Divine and the Universe'.[124] Finally, observing with distaste that 'the allocation of a fortune-telling aspect to these cards is the story of a prolonged impertinence',[125] Waite lists the divinatory meanings of all seventy-eight cards and describes three cartomantic procedures; to a large extent, this account follows the Etteilla tradition. I think that Waite must have been a profoundly self-centred man: he has the egoist's trick of insisting on both eating his cake and having it, while denying to others the right either to have or to eat theirs.

What was the 'secret tradition' about the Tarot which the laws of honour forbade Waite to reveal? It was in part a particular technique of divination with Tarot cards revealed to Golden Dawn adepts who reached the grade 5° = 6°; but the clue to the core of this supposed secret lies in the absence of the expected Hebrew letters from Miss Coleman-Smith's designs for the triumph cards and in Westcott's claim, in his notes to Lévi's *Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum*, that the attribution of the Hebrew letters to the Tarot trumps given by Lévi, Christian and Papus was 'incorrect, presumably by design', and that he himself had learned the correct attribution from an ancient cypher manuscript. This was, in fact, the same forged cypher MS. as that on the basis of which Mathers had concocted the Golden Dawn rituals, and which Westcott claimed had once been in the possession of Éliphas Lévi. In it was contained, among all the rest, an 'attribution' or correspondence of the Hebrew letters with the triumph cards different from that propounded by Lévi and his French disciples. This 'secret attribution' was revealed to the Golden Dawn members when they attained the grade 3° = 8° Practicus, with the injunction that it never be disclosed to any uninitiated person. Since the occultist interpretation of the Tarot cards depended very heavily upon their association with the Cabala via the 'attribution' of the triumph cards to the Hebrew letters, this could be made to seem a very important secret indeed: initiates could believe that they alone had the key to the correct interpretation, not to be discovered by those outside the Order, however many books they read by acknowledged masters of magical doctrine such as Lévi. The price of maintaining both that the attribution given by Lévi and his followers was incorrect and that Lévi had seen the cypher MS., and had therefore been privy to the secret, was the admission that he had deliberately lied in order to deceive his readers, just as Westcott says in the passage cited above. To do him justice, I do not believe that Lévi had any intention of deceiving his readers in this or any other matter; he was aiming to do what he claimed, to reveal the mysteries to all. To such a mind as that of Westcott, who had indeed practised gross deception on his own followers, there was nothing shocking in ascribing such mendacity to Lévi; no doubt most Golden Dawn members were more excited by their possession of such an important secret than they were dismayed by the implication that the inventor of the association of the Tarot with the Cabala was either in error or dishonest. Mathers, in a letter written in April 1900, during the great storm, took the view that Lévi had been in error; he offered as proof that he was himself in communication with the Secret Chiefs that he had been able to reveal the true attribution of the Tarot cards, which de Gébelin, Etteilla, Christian and Lévi had been unable to discover. A note added to the letter by Florence Farr coldly remarks that the attribution was not discovered by Mathers, but had been given in the cypher MSS.[126] It is characteristic of A.E. Waite's individual brand of double-think that, long after he had grounds for doubting the genuineness of those MSS., he was still jealously guarding the 'secret tradition' of which they were the source.

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[124] Ibid., pp. 86-7.

[125] Ibid., p. 130.

Just what the 'secret attribution' was we learn from Aleister Crowley, in Ellic Howe's felicitous phrase 'a child of the Golden Dawn but certainly not its favourite son'. Crowley was not one to be deterred by considerations of honour; in fact, as instanced by his publication of the Golden Dawn rituals, in him a love of secrets was overpowered by a passion for divulging them. He claimed to have received, while in Cairo in 1904, a direct verbal communication from a Secret Chief named Aiwass, who dictated to him what he subsequently published as *The Book of the Law*, and inspired him to found the Astrum Argentinum. In 1912 he published a study of the Tarot in his journal *The Equinox*.[127] In this, he numbers the cards from 1 to 78, in the Etteilla fashion, but on a different system. The twenty-two 'Keys of the Book' or 'Abodes or Atouts of Thooth' are placed last, as nos. 57 to 78; the Fool or Foolish Man, as Key 0, comes first, as no. 57, and, with one irregularity, the remainder in order, from Key 1 (the Magician) as no. 58 to Key 21 (the Universe) as no. 78. The irregularity is that Key 11 (Fortitude) and Key 8 (Justice), while retaining their standard numbers as 'Keys', are interchanged in the numbering of the pack as a whole, so that Key 11 becomes no. 65 of the whole pack and Key 8 no. 68. The letters of the Hebrew alphabet are assigned to them in the order in which they stand in the pack as a whole, running from Aleph to no. 57 (Key 0) down to Tau to no. 78 (Key 21). The resulting association of Hebrew letters with the Tarot triumphs, agreeing with Lévi's only in assigning Tau to the XXI, is without doubt the 'secret attribution' revealed to Golden Dawn initiates and here published by Crowley for the first time;[128] Waite's fears of a 'pretended unveiling', a betrayal of the secret tradition, were thus realised within two years of his expressing them. In Crowley's essay, the suit cards are also arranged in an eccentric order: the four Aces come first, as nos. 1 to 4, then the court cards of each of the four suits in turn, as nos. 5 to 20, and finally, as nos. 21 to 56, the numeral cards from 2 to 10, but in a very complicated and irregular sequence. Quite likely this was also part of the Golden Dawn tradition. The suits are called Wands, Pentacles, Swords and Cups or Chalices: the Kings are said to be really Knights, the Cavaliers to be Princes and the Jacks to be Princesses. Crowley gives detailed descriptions of all the cards, not corresponding to any pack then in existence, or at least available to the public. There is much astrological and Cabalistic symbolism, and the names of various angels are given in Hebrew letters only. A complicated method of divination is expounded, said to be that given to those who have attained the grade of Adeptus Minor in the R.R. et A.C. (i.e. the inner Order of the Golden Dawn).

In 1916, while Crowley was spending the First World War in the United States, he attained the grade of 9° = 2° Magus; and in 1938 he reached the highest grade of all, 10° = 1° Ipsissimus. It will be recalled that not even Mathers or the other two of the Three Chiefs of the original Golden Dawn, nor yet the mythical Fräulein Sprengel herself, ever went beyond the grade 7° = 4°; only the invisible Secret Chiefs were held to have achieved the three highest grades that formed the Third Order. Since there was no one who could initiate Crowley into these exalted grades, he initiated himself: the ceremony which made him a Magus involved the baptism, crucifixion and subsequent eating of a frog.[129] Contrasted with the grandiose rituals devised by Mathers for the Golden Dawn, this cruel and squalid piece of blasphemy illustrates the degeneration to which all magical movements appear to be subject. In 1922 the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.), which pretended to continuity with the Templars and to which the Martinist order formerly presided over by Papus had linked itself, made Crowley its head, predictably provoking a split in the order, some members refusing to accept him. In 1944, three years before his death, the unoriginally entitled *The Book of Thoth*, written by Crowley under the name of the Master Therion, was published in London by the O.T.O. from the Jermyn Street address where Crowley was then living, in a limited edition of 200 copies; a similarly limited edition came out simultaneously in New York. The book was reprinted in New York in 1969, and a paperback edition appeared in 1974. The book gave the name of Frieda Harris as 'artist executant', and contained plates of very florid Tarot designs made by her at Crowley's instructions. Lady Harris, a disciple of Crowley, was the wife of Sir Percy Harris, Liberal M.P. for Bethnal Green and Chief Whip of the Party. Whether it was in 1944 or only more recently that a Tarot pack to her designs was first issued I am uncertain, but one is presently obtainable.[130]

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[126] See Ellic Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, p. 216.

[127] 'A description of the cards of the Tarot', *The Equinox*, vol. 1, no. 8, Autumn 1912; reprinted in booklet form, New York, 1978.

[128] See footnote 135.

[129] John Symonds, *The Great Beast*, revised edition (first published 1971), London, paperback edition, 1973, pp. 236-7, 297-8.

The book throws further light on the matter of the secret, and supposedly 'correct', attribution to the Hebrew letters of what Crowley calls both 'the Tarot trumps' and 'the Atu of Tahuti', or also the 'Keys'; Tahuti, we are informed, is the Lord of Wisdom, and is obviously Thoth once more, while Crowley remarks on p. 37 that 'some etymologists of a singularly idle disposition have tried to derive the French word *atout'* – the ordinary word for 'trump' – from the word ATU meaning 'House'. Crowley gives his version of the story of the cypher MSS.; these were found in an old book bought in 1884-5 by either Dr Woodman, Dr Westcott or Dr Woodford (the Rev. A.F.A. Woodford, a Masonic writer, known to Westcott, who died in 1887). That the cypher MSS. included such an attribution is confirmed by a note appended by Florence Farr to a letter of Mathers written in April 1900, during the great storm; she was contradicting the claim made by Mathers in his letter to have learned the true attribution, unknown to de Gébelin, Etteilla, Christian or Lévi, from the Secret Chiefs. Crowley, however, did not think Lévi ignorant of this 'true' attribution: he repeats Westcott's claim that the cypher MSS. had passed through his hands, and that, although therefore knowing the true attribution, he had gone to particular pains deliberately to give a false one in his published writings. To obtain the true attribution, one must, as before, first remove the Fool from between the XX and XXI (in Lévi's arrangement) to before the I, and then interchange the VIII and XI. The Secret Attribution, Crowley tells us, Frater Perdurabo (himself, under his magical or Golden Dawn motto name) learned, as he was entitled to do, when he attained the grade of Practicus in the Golden Dawn. 'The true attribution was well guarded in the Sanctuary: it only became public when the secret lection issued to members of the grade of Practicus ... was published as a result of the catastrophe attending the English branch of the Order in 1899 and 1900, and the reconstruction of the whole Order in March and April 1904' (p. 39). There was, however, one more secret never discovered by his fellow members before the catastrophe. When, in 1904, he was writing down *The Book of the Law* from the dictation of the messenger of the Secret Chiefs, he asked whether the attribution was correct, and was told that it was, with the exception of XVII (the Star). After long reflection, he came to realise that IV and XVII must also be interchanged. When these two transpositions (VIII with XI and IV with XVII) have been made, the letters must be assigned to the trumps in the resulting sequence, beginning with 0 as Aleph, I as Beth and so on.[131] The satisfactory character of the resulting attribution is, Crowley says, 'the most convincing evidence possible that *The Book of the Law* is a genuine message from the Secret Chiefs' (p. 10). Why anyone should believe that, in all this, Crowley is giving us the truth where, on his account, his hero, Éliphas Lévi, deliberately lied, he does not explain; such an explanation seems particularly called for in view of Crowley's belief that he was a reincarnation of Lévi. Crowley renames Justice (VIII), Fortitude (XI) and Temperance (XIV), qualities which would have had little appeal to him, Adjustment, Lust and Art respectively, and the XX is now called the Aeon. The suits appear as Wands, Cups, Swords and Disks, corresponding exactly with the Elemental Weapons. There are interpretations of the cards by appeal to the Cabala, based on the revised association of Hebrew letters, and procedures for divination: Crowley advances the *Alice in Wonderland* proposition that each Tarot card is, 'in a sense', a living individual.

The transmission to Britain of French neo-occultism, and, with it, the Tarot mystique, took place during the period 1886-1911. In other Western countries, with the possible exception of Italy, the phenomenon belongs strictly to the twentieth century. In the United States, it is true that an anonymous article on 'The Taro' was published as early as 1885: this quoted Paul Christian, expounded an original procedure for divination, and stated that in Spain and Italy 'the wily priesthood' had taken good care that the Tarot pack should be used only for a harmless game called *tarocchi*. It also contains the remarkable statment that 'it is known to adepts' that, besides the twenty-two 'exoteric keys', there should be a further twenty-two 'esoteric keys'; the author knows of no one possessing them, and refrains from commenting on the suggestion made by 'an earnest English neophyte, who has attained a considerable degree of lucidity' that 'supernal intelligences' may furnish the designs for these missing twenty-two cards. But the article was published in an exceedingly obscure journal called *The Platonist*, which was dedicated to promoting Neoplatonic philosophy and also published several translations from Éliphas Lévi,[132] and it can hardly have had any impact, besides having, in Waite's typically mordant phrase, 'strong titles to negligence'.[133] The first attempt to bring Tarot occultism before the American public at large was made when, in 1910, Waite's revised edition of *The Tarot of the Bohemians* was published in the United States at the same time as its publication in Britain. The Waite/Coleman-Smith cartomantic pack was probably put on sale at the same time; but in 1918 a pirated version of that pack was issued in the United States, and, to accompany it, there were published in Chicago a *Key to the Tarot: Oracles Behind the Veil* and an *Illustrated Key to the Tarot*. These were mere plagiarisations of Waite's book; their author was given as L.W. de Laurence, who appears to have been a persistent plagiarist of occult literature.[134]

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[130] See Kaplan, pp. 243-4, for illustrations.

[131] The resulting associations of the *IV* with *Ṣadhe* and the *XVII* with *He* agreed with those of de M.***; see footnote 135.

Several of the early manifestations of the Tarot mystique in the United States are connected, in one way or another, with the Golden Dawn. Paul Foster Case (1884-1954) was originally an official of the Golden Dawn's Thoth-Hermes Temple in Chicago, and wrote on the secret doctrine of the Tarot in a periodical called *The World* which was edited by H.W. Percival and lasted from 1904 to 1918. He later founded a group called the School of Ageless Wisdom, subsequently renamed the Builders of the Adytum, generally referred to as BOTA, which continues to flourish in Los Angeles. In 1927 Case published *A Brief Analysis of the Tarot*, subsequently republished as *The Tarot: a Key to the Wisdom of the Ages*, and, in the following year, *Two Courses in the Tarot*. In 1930 a member of BOTA, John H. Dequer, published *Arrows of Light from the Egyptian Tarot*, illustrated by new Egyptianised designs for the major Arcana. Their names were somewhat altered (thus Fortitude became the Enchantress and the Hanged Man the Martyr); they bore Arabic numerals, but had, in place of Hebrew letters, their rough equivalents in Roman lettering (e.g. TH for Ṭeth), Aleph being assigned to 1 (the Prodigal) and so consecutively, the card numbered '0 or 22' (the Blind Fool) standing at the end and being associated with Tau. In 1931, Case issued an uncoloured Tarot pack, designed by Jessie Burns Parks, in which most, though not all, the major Arcana closely resemble those of the Waite pack, but, as well as Roman numerals, bear Hebrew letters, starting with 0 (the Fool) as Aleph and so consecutively, with no interchange of VIII and XI. Both BOTA 'attributions' thus differ from those of the Golden Dawn and of Crowley.[135] The numeral cards of the Case pack

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[132] 'The Taro' is in *The Platonist*, vol. II, no. 8, August 1885, pp. 126-8. For an article by Éliphas Lévi, 'The Kabalistic doctrine of spirits', see the same vol., pp. 14-16, 19-24; there is a passage about the Tarot on p. 23. An anonymous article also called 'The Taro' was published in London by the Theosophical Publishing Society in *Theosophical Siftings*, vol. I, 1888-9, no. 14, Nov. 19, 1888, pp. 17-19: it describes the same cartomantic procedure as the *Platonist* article, and gives the meanings of the suits, but oddly fails to interpret the twenty-two 'keys'. Neither it nor another anonymous article, 'The Tarot Cards', in *Theosophical Siftings*, vol. III, no. 11, 1890, pp. 13-16, seemed worth mentioning in the text. The latter is a very confused piece of work, which also says nothing about the triumph cards, and, in the style of the popular Press, objects to the profanation of the Divine Name and then proceeds to profane it.

[133] *The Key to the Tarot*, 1972, p. 159.

[134] For illustration, see Kaplan, p. 199.

[135] The various attributions may be tabulated as follows:

	de M.•••	Lévi	G. Dawn	Crowley	Dequer	Case
Aleph	XXI	I	O (Fool)	O (Fool)	I	O (Fool)
Beth	XX	II	I	I	II	I
Gimel	XIX	III	II	II	III	II
Daleth	XVIII	IV	III	III	IV	III
He	XVII	V	IV	XVII	V	IV
Vau	XVI	VI	V	V	VI	V
Zain	XV	VII	VI	VI	VII	VI
Heth	XIV	VIII	VII	VII	VIII	VII

are quite different from those of Pamela Coleman-Smith, and do not depict scenes as hers do. In 1934, Case brought out *The Book of Tokens: Tarot Meditations*, a rhapsodic work which remains the Tarot Bible of BOTA, and is readily obtainable from them. In 1949 BOTA brought out a set of major Arcana, using Dequer's designs, and subsequently added suit cards to make a complete uncoloured Tarot pack; they still supply both this Egyptianised pack and the one originally issued by Paul Foster Case.[136] Yet another American heir of the Golden Dawn tradition is Dr Francis Israél Regardie, who was born in England in 1907 and went to the United States in 1920. In 1928 he became the unpaid secretary of Aleister Crowley, of whom he published a generally sympathetic study, *The Eye in the Triangle* (St Paul, Minnesota) in 1970. In 1934 he joined the Stella Matutina, but was disappointed by his experience of it, of which he gave an account in *My Rosicrucian Adventure* (Chicago, 1936). He is now, according to Francis King, 'a distinguished practitioner of fringe medicine' in California, 'whose technique combines … chiropraxis … with Wilhelm Reich's vegetotherapy and … relaxation exercises ultimately derived from the Golden Dawn'. He is a disciple of Mathers rather than of Waite or even of Crowley; what would have been most to his taste is the original Golden Dawn in the days of the Three Chiefs. Between 1937 and 1940 he published four volumes of Golden Dawn rituals and magical instructions under the title *The Golden Dawn: an Account of the Teachings, Rites and Ceremonies of the Order of the Golden Dawn* (St Paul, Minnesota, second edition in two volumes, 1971). In 1977 a Tarot pack was issued, designed by Robert Wang in accordance with interpretations based by Regardie on Mathers's notebooks; the pack sells as the Golden Dawn Tarot, and is claimed to be that actually used within the Order.[137]

Other American promoters of Tarot occultism stem directly from the French tradition. Manly Palmer Hall, founder of the Philosophical Research Society with headquarters in Los Angeles and author of *An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy*, issued in 1929 a cartomantic Tarot pack designed by J. Augustus Knapp, accompanied by a booklet, *An Essay on the Book of Thoth*; the designs of the Major Arcana, which bear Arabic numerals, Hebrew letters and the Tarot de Marseille names in French, approximate to those of the Tarot de Marseille, and the Hebrew letters conform to the 'attribution' of Lévi and his French followers.[138] Yet another group based in Los Angeles, the Church of Light, formerly called the Brotherhood of Light, supplies a book, *The Sacred Tarot*, written in 1936 by its founder Elbert Benjamine under the pen-name C.C. Zain, and reprinted in 1969, together with another uncoloured Egyptianised pack, whose major Arcana are copied from Falconnier's *XXII Lames Hermétiques* of 1896.[139]

Tarot cartomancy was introduced into Germany by a book by Ernst Kurtzahn, *Der Tarot: die kabbalistische Methode der Zukunftserforschung als Schlüssel zum Okkultismus*, published in Leipzig in 1920. This was followed in 1922 by Woldemar von Uxkull's fanciful narrative *Eine Einweihung im alten Agypten*, published in Berlin and containing illustrations by Leo Sebastian Humer of the 'major Arcana'; it purports to describe an Egyptian initiation ceremony conducted partly in a hall containing twenty-two pictures corresponding to those cards, and must have been inspired by Paul Christian's account in his *Histoire de la magie*, allegedly based on Iamblichus. In 1924 there appeared A. Frank Glahn's *Das deutsche*

Teth	XIII	IX	XI	XI	IX	VIII
Yod	XII	X	IX	IX	X	IX
Kaph	XI	XI	X	X	XI	X
Lamed	X	XII	VIII	VIII	XII	XI
Mwm	IX	XIII	XII	XII	XIII	XII
Nun	VIII	XIV	XIII	XIII	XIV	XIII
Samekh	VII	XV	XIV	XIV	XV	XIV
Ayin	VI	XVI	XV	XV	XVI	XV
Pe	V	XVII	XVI	XVI	XVII	XVI
Sadhe	IV	XVIII	XVII	IV	XVIII	XVII
Qoph	III	XIX	XVIII	XVIII	XIX	XVIII
Resh	II	XX	XIX	XIX	XX	XIX
Shin	I	O (Fool)	XX	XX	XXI	XX
Tau	O (Fool)	XXI	XXI	XXI	O (Fool)	XXI

[136] See R. Cavendish, *The Tarot*, London, 1975, p. 38, and *A History of Magic*, p. 147, and Kaplan, pp. 23, 219 and 239 and Bibliography, under Case, Paul Foster, Dequer, John H., and Percival, H.W. According to Kaplan, only the major Arcana of Dequer's pack have been issued; but my memory is of having seen a complete pack published by BOTA, incorporating Dequer's designs for the major Arcana, when I was in Berkeley, California, in 1976.

[137] See F. King, *Magic: the Western Tradition*, London, 1975, p. 31, and Kaplan, pp. 256, 370 and 375.

[138] See R. Cavendish, *The Tarot*, p. 40, and Kaplan, pp. 23, 198 and 359-60.

[139] See R. Cavendish, *The Tarot*, p. 40, and Kaplan, pp. 23 and 240-1.

Tarotbuch, written to accompany a new 78-card cartomantic pack, in a Teutonic version of the 'Egyptian' style designed to appeal to the German public. In the Etteilla tradition, all seventy-eight cards are numbered consecutively and bear inscriptions giving their cartomantic significance, upright and reversed, while the first twenty-two also carry Hebrew, Roman and runic letters.[140] As will be noticed from the titles of the books by Kurtzahn and Glahn, German occultist writers prefer to preserve the French word *Tarot* in place of the indigenous form *Tarock*; as a result, although Glahn himself acknowledges the connection of the Tarot pack with the game of Tarock, which was, he thinks, devised by the 'intellectual rabble', it is possible to hear the confused assertion that Tarot cards and Tarock cards have no connection with one another.

There is some excuse in Germany for drawing a historically incorrect distinction between *Tarot* and *Tarock* in view of the fact that the game of Tarock, once enormously popular all over Germany, is now confined to the Black Forest, where, played in a quite special manner, it and the cards used for it are known under the name *Cego*, while the name *Tarock* itself has been transferred to a game played with the 36-card German-suited regular pack. In Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the game of Tarock, properly so called, is still widely played; but the Tarock pack used in those countries has diverged so widely from the Italian prototype that it would be possible for an unobservant person, wholly ignorant of the history of the cards, to overlook the relationship between it and, say, a cartomantic pack. Nevertheless, Tarot occultism has made very little headway in Central Europe. As is natural, it originally made an appeal in those parts of the world where the game of Tarot was unknown; those wholly unfamiliar with the Tarot pack are naturally more receptive to claims concerning its immemorial antiquity and its esoteric meaning than those who are accustomed to see it used for play at the local café. This remark obviously applies to Britain and the United States, but may seem surprising in view of the fact that it was in France, where the game of Tarot has been played continuously since the sixteenth century, that Tarot occultism originated; but from about 1700 until after 1945, the game was confined to the South and East of France, and was quite unknown to residents of Paris and other parts of France.

In Italy, any distinction between the Tarot of the occultists and the pack used for play was quite impossible; for there a form of the 78-card pack, using the Italian suit-signs and with designs deriving from the Tarot de Marseille, has long been familiar and, to this day in Piedmont and in Lombardy, has been regularly used for play. A pack in the British Museum shows that Etteilla-derived cartomantic packs were produced in Italy in the nineteenth century.[141] For most of the cards, it uses the designs of the highly Egyptianised French pack, mentioned above, also in the British Museum; but it uses something resembling the traditional designs for the Fool and for triumphs 1 to 5 (the Emperor appears as Napoleon Bonaparte), and the triumphs are all arranged in the standard Tarot de Marseille order and bear their correct names. This pack is therefore far more clearly recognisable as a Tarot pack than are any other of those which follow the Etteilla tradition. Whether Tarot cartomancy ever took hold in Italy in the nineteenth century, I do not know; I suspect that it did not invade Italy in any force until the publication in 1955 of a book by Dr Marius entitled *Il Destino Svelato del Tarocco*, and the simultaneous production by the firm of Modiano of a singularly hideous cartomantic pack called *Cartomanzia Lusso*, still on sale.[142] But, by now, Tarot cartomancy is everywhere: I was unsurprised to see in Mexico City a notice advertising readings of Tarot cards or of coffee grounds, according to preference. Thus what aspired to be taken as the book of the Magi ends up on the same level as the dregs of the coffee-pot.

I have not had the patience to study the voluminous later occultist literature on the Tarot pack, and, if I had, it would be tedious to survey it here. Once the theories of the French neo-occultist school of the second half of the nineteenth century had won a following – and, as I have remarked, all modern occultism takes its rise from that school – the occult interpretation of the Tarot pack was at the same time propagated, because the neo-occultists had made it one of the principal sources of their doctrines. Inevitably, those who do not take the theory of magic with the high seriousness of an Éliphas Lévi, but who are titillated by dabbling in divinatory practices, have formed a public for a literature of instruction in Tarot cartomancy, which naturally continues to retail the false historical accounts of which A.E. Waite complained. Enshrined in this literature is an entire spurious history of the Tarot pack, repeated from one author to the next, and citing as 'authorities' earlier writers in the occultist tradition. Each writer selects, according to taste, from the familiar baseless hypotheses: the Egyptian origin of the cards; their invention in remote antiquity; their connection with and dissemination by the Gypsies; the derivation of regular playing cards from them; one or other of the fantastic etymologies of the word *tarot*. What they all agree on, however, is that it was the intention of the inventors of the Tarot pack that the cards should carry occult meanings according to Cabalistic or other magical symbolism, and that, throughout their history, they have been used for cartomancy. So successful has been the propaganda of the occultists, that these two theses are taken for granted by many who have not the least disposition to practise cartomancy or to believe in the occult; even in Bologna, where the game of *tarocchi*, in a special form peculiar to that city, has been played continuously since the sixteenth century and is still widely played, I have been informed that the cards were first invented for use in fortune-telling. It was Italy that gave us the Tarot pack and the game played with it. I find it sad that those who still play that marvellous game should have been imposed on by erroneous historical claims resting only on the assertions of men whose disregard for the accepted canons of historical evidence was as total as that of Court de Gébelin, Etteilla, Éliphas Lévi and, in his later phase, J.A. Vaillant.

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[140] See *Wahrsagekarten*, no. 76.

[141] I-32 in F.M. O'Donoghue, *Catalogue of the Collection of Playing Cards bequeathed to the Trustees of the British Museum by the late Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, London, 1901. For an illustration, see R. Cavendish, *The Tarot*, p. 136.

[142] See *Wahrsagekarten*, no. 80, and Kaplan, p. 246.

CHAPTER 7

The Game of Tarot

With a pack of cards, you can play games; you can tell fortunes; you can do conjuring tricks; or you can build a house of cards. For the fourth and most trifling of these uses, it matters not at all whether the faces of the cards bear anything on them or not. For the third, all that is necessary is that your audience can readily identify a card shown to them. The second of these practices we have seen to have been virtually unknown until the eighteenth century. It follows that a special type of pack, invented around 1440, can have been invented for one purpose only: for play.

We have no actual description of any game played with the Tarot pack from before the mid-seventeenth century. We do, however, have sufficient evidence from which to extrapolate backwards, so as to determine, with high probability, at least the main features of the original game of *trionfi*, the game played with the Tarot pack at the time of its first invention and that for which it was devised. All later forms of the game have certain constant features, which may be presumed to have belonged to it from its inception. We know how certain forms of the game, played with variant types of Tarot pack, were later played, and we have excellent grounds for thinking that these games changed little in the course of the centuries; two of these variant packs – the Minchiate pack and the Tarocco Bolognese pack (sometimes called the Tarocchino pack) – originated in the sixteenth century, and so we have a good idea of the sixteenth-century Italian style of play. We do have a description of the game intended to be played with a very special form of Tarot pack invented at the very end of the fifteenth century by the poet Matteo Maria Boiardo. We cannot place a great deal of weight on this, because the description ends with the remark that one can also use this pack to play the usual sort of game; but at least it seems probable that those features which the game played with Boiardo's pack shared with those later played with the standard Tarot pack were, from the first, characteristic of Tarot games.

In asking for what purpose the Tarot pack was invented, we are asking why the twenty-two additional cards – the Matto and the twenty-one triumphs – were added to the regular pack. We shall not gain any enlightenment if we study the iconography of the Tarot pack. That study is, in itself, fascinating, and has absorbed many people, not all of them with occultist leanings; it is, no doubt, worth pursuing for its own sake. But it is highly improbable that, by this means, we shall learn anything relevant to the game played with Tarot cards, or, therefore, to the primary purpose for which the pack was originally devised. Whoever invented the pack wanted to add, to the regular playing-card pack, two new elements: one consisting of a single card, the Matto or Fool; the other consisting of a sequence of twenty-one picture cards. The members of the latter sequence had to be memorable and readily recognisable. One way of achieving this would have been to inscribe large numerals on the cards; the subjects would then have been comparatively unimportant, just as it is essentially a matter of indifference to a modern Bridge or Poker player what the court cards look like, so long as they have clear indices to give their rank and suit. This was, indeed, the method adopted, from the end of the fifteenth century onwards, in many, possibly in most, Tarot packs; and we shall see that, in the type of Tarot pack that, from the later eighteenth century on, superseded the traditional form in Germany and Central Europe, the subjects on the triumph cards really did come to be entirely irrelevant. But, when the Tarot pack was invented, such a device would not have seemed natural. In the mid-fifteenth century, indices of any kind were unknown: card players were used to identifying each card – court card or numeral card – from the whole design, not from one special ingredient of it. It was therefore necessary to choose, for the new picture cards, a series of very definite subjects, that could be easily distinguished, and with each of which could be associated a name that could be used to refer to the card. The subjects on the Tarot triumphs – the Sun, the Devil, Death, the Virtues, the Wheel of Fortune, Love, the Pope and all the rest – served just this purpose. By and large, they were standard subjects of mediaeval and Renaissance iconography, to be met with in many other contexts; they were precisely the sort of subjects which any fifteenth-century Italian, faced with the problem of devising a sequence of twenty-one picture cards, would have been likely to select. We can derive some entertainment from asking why that particular selection was made, and whether there is any symbolic meaning to the order in which they were placed; and we may or may not come up with a plausible or illuminating answer. (If we do not, that may not indicate that we have failed to solve the riddle; there may be no riddle to solve.) But our answer, though it may throw light on what the original designer of the pack, or the Duke or other noble who ordered it to be made, had in mind, is unlikely to throw any on the way in which an average fifteenth-century player of the game would have viewed the cards. For him, they were simply a set of picture cards arranged in a particular sequence and having a particular role in the game; he would be as unlikely to take any special interest in the selection of subjects or possible symbolic significance in their order as a modern Bridge player is to be able to tell you which Jacks have moustaches.

We can see how little importance was attached to the precise subjects represented on the triumph cards from the variations introduced at various times and places. The presence of the Pope and Popess has perennially given offence to some, and various replacements have been found for them. In that variation on the Tarot de Marseille pattern known as the Tarot de Besançon, originating in the seventeenth century and widely used in eighteenth-century Germany and Switzerland, Jupiter and Juno were substituted for the Pope and Popess. In the quite different pattern used in Belgium for the Italian-suited Tarot pack during the eighteenth century, the Pope and Popess were replaced, respectively, by Bacchus and the Spanish Captain (the latter a character from the Commedia dell'Arte). In Bologna after 1725, in deference to Papal displeasure (Bologna being within the Papal States), the Pope, Popess, Emperor and Empress were all removed in favour of four Moorish kings or satraps. It would be a mistake to read into these substitutions any subtle symbolic equation of the new figures with the old ones: all that was being sought was a choice of new and easily recognisable figures, with obvious labels, in place of the old ones that caused offence. In a similar way, when a Sicilian duchess objected to the presence of the Devil in the pack, her wishes were accommodated by replacing him with a Ship, a card borrowed from the Minchiate pack and there representing the element of Water. It could be objected that all that these examples show is that, by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the original symbolism had been forgotten or was no longer regarded as significant. But the fact is that the same attitude was already clearly displayed in the sixteenth century. The Minchiate pack invented in that century in Florence is the sole form of Tarot pack – with the possible exception of that represented by the Visconti di Modrone pack – having a different number of triumph cards from the otherwise invariable twenty-one: it has as many as forty. To find new subjects for this greatly increased number of triumph cards, the devisers of the pack added the four Elements, the four missing Virtues (Prudence, Faith, Hope and Charity) and the twelve signs of the Zodiac. It has seldom been suggested that the resulting sequence of forty triumph subjects has any special symbolic significance: it is obvious that those who devised the Minchiate pack simply looked around for a convenient method of adding new and memorable subjects to the existing ones. If this was true in the sixteenth century for the inventors of the Minchiate pack, there is little reason to suppose that it was not also true a hundred years earlier for the inventors of the Tarot pack itself. At any rate, if there was any special symbolism underlying the sequence of Tarot triumphs, as originally devised, this played no role in the games played with the cards, and hence disappeared from the consciousness of card players.

It might be thought that the introduction, towards the end of the fifteenth century, of the practice of inscribing numerals on the triumph cards marked a change in the manner of play with those cards: that, originally, they did not form a sequence with a definite order, but that the association of a numbering with them represented the imposition of such an order for the first time. If so, the original game played with the Tarot pack can have had no resemblance to those later played with it; and the suggestion is weakened by the grave difficulty of making any plausible proposal about what kind of a game it can have been in which there were twenty-two distinct picture cards, all with a special role in the game, but none ranking higher or lower than any other. The suggestion is, however, quite superfluous. It is founded on the fact that we should find it very troublesome to have to memorise an ordering of twenty-one different picture cards without the aid of a numbering appearing on the cards themselves. But, as we saw in Chapter 4, players of the special form of the game of *tarocchi* peculiar to the city of Bologna and its environs continued to do just that until the later eighteenth century, when for the first time makers of the Tarocco Bolognese pack adopted the practice, universal elsewhere, of putting numerals on the triumph cards – more exactly, on those of the middle range, from 5 to 16. The eighteenth-century card-game books that give the rules of the game as played in Bologna simply list the names of the triumph cards in order: anyone wishing to play the game had to commit this sequence to memory. As noted in Chapter 4, there can be no doubt that this ordering was already a feature of the game in the seventeenth century; the intense conservatism of Bolognese players, in respect both of the rules of the game and of the designs of the cards, makes it overwhelmingly probable that it goes back to the beginning of the sixteenth. Of that which, for two and a half centuries, Bolognese card players were able to do, there is no reason to declare those of the fifteenth-century courts of Milan and Ferrara incapable.

In any case, there is positive evidence that, from the start, the triumph cards were regarded as forming an ordered sequence. The earliest detailed reference to the Tarot pack is the sermon, already mentioned, by an anonymous Dominican friar included in the volume of sermons formerly belonging to Robert Steele, and dating from between 1450 and 1480. In this, the triumph cards are not merely listed in sequence, but actually numbered. No hypothesis makes any kind of sense, or has any evidence in its favour, other than that the additional cards of the Tarot pack, the Fool excepted, formed from the outset a series with a determinate ranking which originally had to be memorised by the players and subsequently came to be indicated by numerical indices on the cards.

To understand the purpose for which the Tarot pack was invented, we have, therefore, to ask for what reason an ordered sequence of cards, of different length and composition from the ordinary suits, was added to the regular pack: the particular subjects depicted on these cards can, in this context, be entirely neglected. Obviously, to find the answer, we have to look at the role that these cards play in the game, on the reasonable assumption that the essential features of the game, in the various forms in which it was later played, belonged to it from the start. This is easily stated: the game of Tarot is a trick-taking game, and the twenty-one triumph cards are permanent trumps.

Probably most readers of this book are already familiar with trick-taking games such as Whist, Bridge or Pinochle. It may be worth while, however, to make the mechanics of such games quite explicit at this point, particularly because we ordinarily take it for granted that a number of distinct features go together.

Trick-taking games

In any trick-taking game, it is essential that, at the beginning of actual play, the players should all start with an equal number of cards in their hands. In each game, there is a cyclic direction of play – clockwise or counter-clockwise. In Tarot games, the direction is usually counter-clockwise: this is because Tarot is an Italian game in origin, and in Italy and Spain the standard direction was originally counter-clockwise, while north of the Alps and the Pyrenees it was clockwise. The cards held by the players are played out in tricks, each trick consisting of as many cards as there are players, each player contributing one. Each player plays his card to the trick face upwards in the centre of the table. At the beginning of each trick, one of the players has the lead, that is, the duty to play the first card to the trick: the other cards are then played successively by the other players in rotation, according to the designated direction, clockwise or counter-clockwise. If, at the beginning of play, each player holds *n* cards, there will therefore usually be *n* tricks, though in certain games, so long as the stock of cards not dealt out before play is not exhausted, each player replenishes his hand by drawing one card from the stock after each trick; this is primarily a device for making the game one of imperfect information when it is played by only two players. The rules of the game will provide a way of determining which is the winning card in any trick; the player who played that card is said to have won the trick, and he gathers up all the cards of the trick and places them face down beside him. The cards of a trick already played are out of play, and cannot be used again in any later trick; but the outcome of the given round of play depends on what cards, and how many, have been won in tricks by the various players. (A 'round' of play is to be understood as that segment of the game that lasts from one deal to the next.) When two or more players play in permanent or temporary partnership, one partner usually collects all the cards won in tricks by himself or any of his partners.

The foregoing description may be taken as a definition of a 'trick-taking game': there are some games having some of those features but not others, for example ones in which the player who has won the trick takes the cards of that trick into his hand for later use, but they are based on an essentially different principle. In some trick-taking games, a good deal takes place in any round before actual play begins, for example bidding: but there are three main features to be specified before the mechanics of the actual play is determined. These are: (i) who has the lead to each trick; (ii) which is the winning card in any trick; and (iii) what constraints restrict a player's freedom to choose the card he will play to a trick.

In trick-taking games – not only European ones, but those played in China and in India and Persia as well – it is a virtually universal rule that the winner of any trick before the last has the lead to the next trick. This leaves only the player who leads to the first trick to be determined by convention. The rule varies in different games: but, in European games without bidding, it is usually the player next in rotation to the dealer – the one on the dealer's right if the direction of play is counter-clockwise, and the one on his left if it is clockwise – who leads to the first trick.

Winning a trick

In trick-taking games played without trumps, the rule almost always holds that a card of any suit other than that of the card led to the trick is devoid of trick-taking power: the trick is therefore won by the highest-ranking card of the same suit as the first card played to it. This rule, complicated in most games by the presence of trumps, is so nearly universal that most card players would probably regard it as one of the defining characteristics of trick-taking games. An alternative principle, however, is not merely abstractly conceivable, but is actually realised in a few deviant trick-taking games, and serves to point up how dominant is the usual rule that (trumps excepted) only a card of the suit led can win the trick. The alternative is to disregard suit altogether in determining who has won the trick, and count as the winning card that of highest rank irrespective of suit. Such a rule prevails in the French game of le Truc and its now obsolete English cousin Putt. In a modified form, it also governs the still popular games of Aluette and el Truco, the former played on the West coast of France with a special type of 48-card Spanish-suited pack, the latter in Spain and South America with the 40-card pack. Under this rule, it can of course happen that two cards of equal rank, higher than any other card in the trick, are played by opponents to the same trick. Such a situation can also arise, even under the usual rule, in any game played with two or more packs simultaneously; and it is then sometimes resolved by counting the card played later as beating that played earlier, sometimes by the opposite rule. In all the four deviant trick-taking games mentioned above, however, such a trick is not considered as won by any of the players. Yet another conceivable alternative would be to regard the entire pack as forming a single sequence, so that a trick would be won by the highest-ranking card of the highest suit; but, as far as I am aware, there is no game governed by a principle of that kind. Even the first alternative rule for determining which card wins the trick holds good only in a very small minority of unusual games, just those four already mentioned: in the overwhelming majority of trick-taking games the rule is that, unless trumps are admitted and a trump is played to the trick, the winning card is the highest one of the suit led.

Following suit

In European trick-taking games, there is seldom any constraint on what card may be led to a trick. There are a few exceptions to this, but they are infrequent and minor: usually, the player with the lead is legally free to lead any card of his choosing from his hand. It is very rare, however, for there to be no constraints on the cards played by the other players, those who play to a trick to which the first card has already been led. Among European games, those in which there is no constraint at all are mostly two-handed games in which each player draws a card from the stock after each trick; and then, as soon as the stock is exhausted, constraints come into force. The most familiar constraint is that requiring each player to 'follow suit' if he can: that is, to play a card of the suit led if he has one. Less usual, but far from uncommon, is the additional requirement that any player who is able to play a higher-ranking card of the suit led than any so far played to the trick must do so. In games with trumps, the constraints vary a great deal: but, although there is much variation in detail, which naturally has a profound effect upon the strategy of the game, almost all European trick-taking games leave the player with the lead free to play any card that he chooses, and almost all circumscribe in one way or another the freedom of the other players.

Trumps

The presence of trumps in a trick-taking game introduces an entirely new additional feature into the determination of which player has won a given trick. When such games are played with the regular pack, some means or other is used to select one of the four suits as the trump suit for a given round. When there is bidding, the nomination of one of the suits as trumps may form an ingredient of the bidding itself, as in Bridge; an older practice, exemplified in Skat as now played, is for the declarer – the player making the highest bid – to announce the trump suit, at his choice, after the bidding is completed. When there is no bidding, the trump suit is determined by chance: when not all the cards are dealt out, the first undealt card may be turned face up, and its suit taken as the trump suit; when the whole pack is dealt out, the last card dealt may be turned up for the same purpose, or the pack may be cut before the deal begins. The cards of the trump suit behave in a quite different way from those of the other suits (the 'plain' suits). Any card of the trump suit, even the lowest, beats every card of a plain suit, even the highest; and it does so irrespective of the suit led to the trick. The rule governing which card wins the trick thus takes the form that the trick is won by the highest trump played to the trick, or, if the trick contains no trump, then by the highest card of the suit led.

In games played with the Tarot pack, there is no need of any device for determining a suit as trumps, for the twenty-one triumph cards always fulfil this function, while the four ordinary suits are always plain suits. The triumph cards are, however, trumps in precisely the sense just given: that is to say, each trick is won by the highest triumph card played to it, or, if none is played, then by the highest card of the suit led. For this purpose, the triumph cards normally rank in descending numerical order: that is, the highest is the XXI, followed by the XX and so on down in sequence to the I (the Bagatto or Pagat). Within each suit, the ranking is in accordance with the ancient principle observed in Italy and Spain. That is to say, in every suit, the four highest-ranking cards are the court cards: the King is the highest, followed by the Queen, then the Cavalier and then the Jack. In Swords and Batons, the numeral cards follow in descending numerical order: the 10 ranks next below the Jack, followed by the 9, and so on down to the Ace, which is the lowest card of the suit. In Cups and Coins, however, they rank in ascending numerical order: in these suits, the Ace ranks next below the Jack, followed by the 2, then the 3, and so on, with the 10 as the lowest card. It is obligatory to follow suit, if possible. This means that, if a card of a plain suit is led, then every player who still has any cards of that suit must play one to the trick; and, if a triumph card is led to a trick, then likewise any player who still has some triumphs in his hand must play one. In Whist and Bridge, as in many other trick-taking games, a player who has a void in the suit led (has no cards in that suit), and who therefore cannot follow suit, is at liberty, when it was a plain suit that was led, either to play a trump or to 'throw away' a card of another plain suit, thus denying himself the chance to win the trick: 'throwing away' is, of course, tactically important as a means of creating a void in one's hand, so as subsequently to be able to trump a trick to which that suit is led, or simply to get rid of losing cards. In Tarot, however, there is not this opportunity: when a plain suit is led, any player unable to follow suit has the obligation to play a trump if he has one. This obligation holds good even if the player's partner has already won the trick, and even if it means playing a lower trump than some other player has already played. The reason for this is that there are, in games played with the 78-card pack, half as many trumps again as there are cards in any one plain suit; in Minchiate, and in the many games played with shortened packs, the proportion is even higher. If a player with a large number of trumps were allowed to hoard them to use on valuable tricks, he would have too great an advantage. In games like Whist and Bridge, the only way to force one's opponents to play their trumps is by leading trumps oneself: in Tarot, it can alternatively, and more economically, be done by repeatedly leading a plain suit in which they are short.

The Matto

This explains the role of the triumph cards in the game. The role of the Fool or Matto is entirely different. To speak more exactly, it was entirely different in the earlier of those forms of the game of which we have records. In those forms of it now played in Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Czechoslovakia and the Black Forest, it has been transformed into the highest trump card, beating even the XXI: but, previously, it had a quite distinct role, which it retains in the forms of the game played in Italy, France and Switzerland. In games of this kind, the player holding the Matto can play it to any trick he chooses: it has no trick-taking power, but it releases the player who plays it from the obligation to follow suit or to trump. He may thus use it to avoid losing a valuable card which would otherwise be captured in that trick. There is some variation of rule about whether it is permissible to lead the Matto as the first card of a trick; in any case, it is usually inadvisable. When it is allowed, the player next in rotation is usually at liberty to play any card of his choosing; and the card that he plays is treated as if it has been led to the trick, so that the remaining player or players have to follow suit to it if they can and, if they cannot, to trump if they can.

The object of the game

In order fully to explain the role of the Matto, it is necessary to say something about how the winner of a round is determined. So far, we have merely said that the winning player or side in a trick-taking game is determined by the cards won by the various players in tricks. Trick-taking games may be classified into those, like Bridge and Ombre, in which what determines which player or side has won a given round is simply the total number of tricks won by each, and those in which what matters is which particular cards each player has won in tricks. There is no serviceable accepted terminology to distinguish these two types: I shall therefore call those of the former type *simple* trick-taking games, and those of the latter type *complex* ones. These are, of course, intended merely as technical terms: no suggestion is being made that Bridge, or Ombre for that matter, is an easy game to play. In complex trick-taking games, different cards carry different point values, according to their rank; and the winner or loser is determined by the total number of points each player has on the cards he has won in tricks. Originally, the points won by a player constituted his score for the round. In many games, however, the points won on the cards captured in tricks serve merely to determine which player or side has won the round, and the scoring is done on a different principle. In order, then, to avoid confusion, it is necessary to keep the two kinds of points carefully distinguished: we may therefore speak of *card points* to mean those that go to determine which player or side has won the round, and of *game points* to mean those that are actually marked on the score sheet (or immediately paid in cash or chips). In most complex trick-taking games, such as Skat and Jass, the national card games of Germany and Switzerland, only certain cards carry any point-values at all: the others contribute nothing to the total of card points, but are merely of strategic significance, as determining who wins the trick. In a few such games, however, such as Manille, every card contributes to the card-point total, though some make a much higher contribution than others.

Trick-taking games may be classified in another way as well, namely as *positive* or *negative*. In positive games, the object is to win as many tricks, or as many card points, as possible, or to win at least a certain number. In negative games, the object is to win as few tricks, or as few card points, as possible, or to win no more than a certain number. In certain games with bidding, the object may be positive or negative according to the bid made, and thus vary from round to round. Nevertheless, most trick-taking games can be classified as primarily positive or primarily negative.[1] It seems impossible to say whether simple or complex trick-taking games are the older in Europe: it may be that both are as old as card playing itself. By contrast, it is clear that negative games, of which the best-known to-day is Hearts and its variants, and the earliest really successful one was Reversis, which originated in Spain in the sixteenth century, are a later development: the positive games came first, and subsequently the idea occurred of playing a game with essentially the same mechanics, but with the aim of the players reversed. (This is evident enough from the very name of Reversis – in Spanish Revesino – which was played in England under the name of Losing Loadam, and is probably the game referred to by Rabelais as *Coquimbert, qui gaigne perd*.)

Card points in Tarot

In this terminology, Tarot is a positive complex trick-taking game. It resembles Manille rather than such games as Skat and Jass in that every trick won contributes to the card-point total, even if it contains none of the high-scoring cards. The method usually adopted for computing the total of card points won by each player is rather complicated, and will be described later. For the present, I give here a simplified description, which probably corresponds rather well to the original method: it must be understood that some particular forms of Tarot diverge very considerably from the methods here described. In this simplified method, each player scores 1 card point for every trick he wins. In addition, he scores 4 card points for each King he wins in tricks (whether originally played by himself or another), 3 points for each Queen, 2 points for each Cavalier and 1 point for each Jack. He also scores 4 points for the highest trump (triumph XXI), 4 points for the lowest trump (triumph I, the Bagatto) and 4 points for the Matto or Fool. The player holding the XXI cannot lose it, since it is the highest card in the pack. The player holding the Bagatto, on the other hand, can very easily lose it, since it can be beaten by any other trump: so trying to bring the Bagatto home, if you hold it, and trying to capture it, if you do not, are important subsidiary objects of the game. Now, as remarked, the Matto has no trick-taking power. But, while it cannot take a trick, it cannot normally be captured either. When the player who holds the Matto plays it to a trick, it is not taken away by the winner of the trick: the player who originally held it takes it back and puts it with the cards he has won. Usually, he is required to give another card in exchange for it from among the cards he has already won; he will, naturally, select a low card (a card without special point-value). If he has not yet won any tricks, he waits until he does in order to give a card in exchange for the Matto to the player who won the trick to which he played it. But (whether the rule about offering a card in exchange is in force or not) if the player who played the Matto never wins any tricks at all, he must, at the end of the round, surrender the Matto to the player who won the trick to which he played it. Normally speaking, therefore, a player holding the Matto can count on gaining 4 card points with it. The rule governing the Matto is usually summarised by saying that it can neither capture nor be captured: it would, of course, have appeared senseless to state the rule that it is not captured before the system of card points had been explained. Because, by playing the Matto, a player is released from the obligation to follow suit or to trump, the card is sometimes known in Italian as the *Scusa*, and frequently, in French, as the *Excuse*. This term was corrupted in German into *Sküs* or *Skys*, and it is as *der Sküs* that it is now regularly referred to in German, despite the fact that, in the games played in Austria and Baden, it has long lost the role that has been here described, and has, in effect, been converted into trump XXII.

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[1] There is a small modern category which escapes this classification for a different reason. One example is the simple trick-taking game of Oh, Hell, in which each player's object is to make *exactly* the number of tricks he declared that he would, no less and no more; the excellent game played with the Taotl pack, a modern invention with five suits and various extra cards, works according to the same principle. Likewise, in a modern member of the Jass family of complex trick-taking games played in Switzerland, Differenzlerjass, each player predicts how many points he will make, and obtains a negative score consisting of the difference, by defect or excess, between his actual and predicted total.

Now, it may be said, this tells us how the triumph cards and the Matto were used in play: but it fails to explain why the Tarot pack was invented in the first place. If, in the plain suits, it is the court cards that are going to carry high point-values, we can readily understand the addition of a fourth court card: but that, as we have seen, was by no means unique to the Tarot pack, being a frequent feature of fifteenth-century German packs, particularly of the costlier sort, hand-painted or copper-engraved. The special role of the Matto in play also made this a comprehensible addition to the pack: although there appears to be no actual connection between the Matto and the later Joker, and although the function of the two cards is different, we may naturally compare the invention of the one with that of the other. But that does not account for the principal distinguishing feature of the Tarot pack, the sequence of the twenty-one triumph cards. If, in a game played with the regular pack, the trump suit is determined by chance at the beginning of each round, it would clearly make no essential difference to the game if, instead, some suit were designated a permanent trump suit, as indeed happens in certain games. Thus, when there is no bidding, there is no disadvantage in having special cards as permanent trumps; but, conversely, there appears to be no particular advantage in it either, since it is so easy to confer that role on one of the suits by convention. It is true that, in Tarot, there are in effect five suits – the trumps in addition to the four plain suits: but five-suited packs were perfectly well known in the fifteenth century, at least in Germany, and it would seem much easier to introduce an additional suit than to devise a special set of picture cards. It is also true that the sequence of triumphs is longer than any of the suits proper. This, if desired, would have been harder to achieve by adding extra cards to one suit of a regular pack: numeral cards higher than 10 would be very difficult to identify without indices, and the addition of any large number of court cards takes us precisely in the direction of the Tarot triumphs. However, the effect can be attained by convention, namely by removing certain cards from the suits to which they properly belong, and treating them as permanent trumps; this is a feature of several games, including Ombre, Schafkopf and Skat. The role of the triumph cards as permanent trumps in the games played with the Tarot pack simply does not, at first sight, provide an adequate motive for the invention and production of a special pack of cards not readily adapted to the playing of games of other kinds.

The puzzle is solved once we drop the assumption that, at the time when the Tarot pack was first devised, the idea of trick-taking games with trumps was already familiar. Our difficulties were caused by taking it for granted that card players of the time were already acquainted with games played with the regular pack, in which some one suit would be designated as trumps, permanently or for a round at a time: we then could not see why anyone should go to the trouble of inventing a new form of pack in which a quite special set of cards were to serve as trumps. But, if we assume that the idea of trumps was not already familiar, the aspect of the matter is quite altered. In that case, the invention of the Tarot pack must have, at the same time, constituted the introduction of the idea of trumps into trick-taking games, one of the great inventions in the history of card play; and the question, 'Why bother with a special set of picture cards when one of the ordinary suits would do?', loses most of its force. We must, of course, assume that, when the Tarot pack was invented, trick-taking games in general, and, more specifically, positive complex trick-taking games, were already well known. In games, as in all other fields, human inventiveness usually proceeds by a step at a time; we cannot expect more than one, or at the most two, new ideas from the same source simultaneously. The game of Tarot cannot possibly have been the first trick-taking game known in Europe: the first realisation of the fundamental conception of trick-taking play must have assumed a very straightforward form, without the complication of trumps or that of the Matto. Indeed, we know for certain that trick-taking games are older in Europe than the Tarot pack, since the German game of Karnöffel was such a game, and is referred to as early as 1426; and it had complicated rules, under which the natural ranking of the cards is violently disturbed, so that it is as incapable of having been the earliest known trick-taking game as is Tarot itself.

For similar reasons, it is not thinkable, either, that Tarot was the first known complex trick-taking game, that is, the first in which different point-values were attached to the various cards. On our hypothesis, the invention of the Tarot pack was the invention of the idea of trumps. It is not quite certain that the Matto was an original member of the pack; it may have been added at a slightly later stage, when the form of pack represented by the Visconti di Modrone one was replaced by what became the standard 78-card form. There is also one piece of evidence to suggest that the classic manner of using the Matto may have been a later development, and that it was originally the lowest trump.[2] But, whether or not the invention of the Tarot pack represented the introduction of the Matto in its classic role, one radically new and fundamental idea, that of trumps, is as much as we can suppose to have been introduced at one time; it is implausible to suggest that the game of Tarot simultaneously embodied the innovation of assigning to the cards not merely different trick-taking powers but different point-values. It is true that we do not have such clear positive evidence to the contrary as in the case of the trick-taking principle itself: Karnöffel was, in our technical terminology, a simple trick-taking game, and no game can be cited that is known both to have been older than Tarot and to have been a complex game in our technical sense. There are, however, several complex trick-taking games played with the regular pack in which the point-values obey the same general principle as that displayed by the court cards in the plain suits in Tarot: that is to say, the high-scoring cards are precisely those with the greatest trick-taking power, and these carry point-values which diminish by 1 point as one descends through the sequence. Among such games is the sixteenth-century Italian game of Trappola, in which the highest-ranking cards in each suit are, in descending order, Ace, King, Cavalier and Jack, these being also the high-scoring cards, carrying point-values of 6, 5, 4 and 3 card points respectively. Other examples are provided by the Spanish game of Malilla, sometimes asserted to be an invention of the nineteenth century, but demonstrably as old as 1776,[3] and quite possibly far older, together with its French and Dutch descendants Manille and Manilla, and the rather similar Spanish game of Solo (not to be confused with several other games of the same name). In all these last four games, the five highest-ranking cards of each suit carry, from the highest to the lowest, point-values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1: in Malilla, these cards are, in descending order, the 9, Ace, King, Cavalier and Jack; in Manille they are the 10, Ace, King, Queen and Jack; in Manilla, the Ace, 10, King, Queen and Jack; and in Solo, the 7, Ace, King, Cavalier and Jack. Yet another example is the negative complex game of Revesino or Reversis, originating in Spain no later than the early sixteenth century, in which the highest cards of each suit are Ace, King, Cavalier or Queen and Jack, bearing the point-values 4, 3, 2 and 1. A not very well-known game, played both in France and Germany under the names Quarante des Rois and Vierzig vom König, has the King, Queen and Jack as the highest cards of each suit, carrying point-values of 5, 4 and 3 respectively. Another game of this kind is Fünfzehnern, popular in Germany throughout the nineteenth century, in which the top five cards of each suit were Deuce (Ace), King, Ober, Unter and 10, once more with point-values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. A long obsolete member of the genus is the Alsatian game of Trümpfspiel described by Daniel Martin in 1637, in which the top cards of each suit were Ace, King, Queen and Jack, with point-values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.[4]

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[2] The evidence is from the *Invettiva* of Lollio: see Chapter 21.

[3] Gégé, *Historique et règle du jeu de la Manille*, Enghien-les-Bains, 1883, maintains that the game originated only in 1865, and spread from the South of France to the rest of the country only after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. This last remark may well be correct, but, for the rest, Gégé is completely confused. He fails to distinguish between French Manille and Spanish Malilla, apparently not realising that

None of these games shows any sign of being directly derived from or influenced by Tarot: the mark of such an influence is a special value or role for the lowest trump. Indeed, Fünfzehnern and Reversis are played without any trump suit, and the same appears to have been true of Trappola in its original form. (Fünfzehnern has, indeed, a curious affinity to the Indo-Persian Ganjifa games, which is presumably a result of coincidence.) Probably none of these games is as old as Tarot; but they collectively bear witness to what is very likely to have been a principle of assigning point-values in complex trick-taking games that antedated the invention of the Tarot pack, and may go back to the introduction of card games into Europe. This very straightforward principle is that underlying the assignment of point-values to suit cards in Tarot: that governing their assignment to the additional cards of the Tarot pack is considerably more subtle. It seems natural to suppose that the game of Tarot was founded upon some existing game or games played with the regular pack and without trumps, in which the high-scoring cards in each suit were just the court cards.

Now, under the supposition that the Tarot pack was devised in order to embody what was then a completely new idea in trick-taking play, that of trumps, its invention makes perfect sense. Trump cards play a completely different role in a trick-taking game from cards of the plain suits: they can win a trick to which a different suit was led, and they beat all other cards regardless of their rank. If card players had long been accustomed to trick-taking games played without trumps, in which the principle held without exception that a trick could be won only by a card of the suit led, then, when the idea of trumps first occurred to some ingenious individual, they would as much be thought of as cards fulfilling a completely new and special function as would the Matto, when that was first invented. It would thus be entirely natural to realise the new idea, not by adopting a convention under which one of the suits behaved quite differently from the others, but by adding a new sequence of cards to the pack. There would have been no apparent reason why this new sequence should have the same structure, or the same length, as the existing suits; nor would it seem natural to assign a new suit-symbol to it, as if it were equivalent to the ordinary suits. These would be cards intended to play an entirely new role in the game,

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the Spanish pack lacks 10s, and describes Manille as being popular in Catalonia, Navarre and Andorra as well as the South of France. Having discovered that the game played in France under the name of Manille in the eighteenth-century was an entirely different one, namely a Stops game, later called Comète, he quite mistakenly takes early Spanish references to Malilla to be alluding to the Stops game. An anonymous pamphlet of 1776, *Le Jeu de la Malille*, perhaps published in Amsterdam, informs the reader that the game has long been popular in Spain, and hopes that it may be introduced into France. It describes the Spanish game, as played with the 48-card pack, and the author states that he is abridging the earliest written account, written by a Don Antonio, whose date he does not give. Malilla therefore probably dates from the first half of the eighteenth century or earlier, while Manille may be an adaptation from the early nineteenth century.

[4] Daniel Martin, *Parlement nouveau*, Strasbourg, 1637, ch. 74, p. 635. This is a French/German reader, with parallel texts on a variety of subjects, intended for those learning one or other language. I have not seen the original, but the French text of the entire book is reprinted in *Collection*

and therefore naturally represented by designs of a new kind: like the important cards of the four suits, they would be picture cards, but they would no more need a suit-sign than would the Matto, or the Joker in a modern pack.

If this hypothesis is correct, the invention of the Tarot pack was one of the great moments in the history of card play. One of the reasons why a serious history of card games has never been written is that people tend not to take card games seriously, in the way that they are prepared to take chess. But another reason is the complexity of the subject: card games proliferate far more rapidly than do board games. When such a history comes to be written, it will therefore have to concentrate, not so much on the detailed evolution, spread and fortunes of individual games, as on their constituent ideas. New card games are constantly being invented, and old ones modified: but it is much more rarely that anyone comes up with a radically new principle of play. The evolution of a card game is primarily the history of its adopting or adapting principles already practiced in other games; the invention of new card games primarily a matter of a new combination of existing ideas.[5] In the course of this process, the new or modified games present tactical problems that may not be able to be exactly paralleled in older games; even an alteration in the method of scoring may radically affect strategy, as in the change from Auction to Contract Bridge. Nevertheless, human inventive genius is best displayed, in the field of games, when someone devises a fundamentally new principle of play; and, in the history of card games, that has not happened often. If we restrict ourselves to trick-taking games, then, since the principle of trick-taking play was first invented, only two outstanding new principles have been introduced: the idea of trumps, and the idea of bidding.

We are able to say precisely where the idea of bidding comes from: it comes from the Spanish game known in Spain as Tresillo, and everywhere else as Ombre or l'Hombre. This game is comparatively little played to-day: but, in its time, it was the most successful card game ever invented, enjoying, at rather different dates, an enormous vogue in France, in England, in Germany and in Italy; it was carried by Portuguese sailors to Indonesia and Japan. It occupied the same position as Bridge does to-day, as *the* fashionable card game and as, par excellence, *the* intellectual card game: and it occupied it for a far longer period than that for which Contract Bridge has yet existed. Its history in France can be traced through the series of card-game books published every few years in that country from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. From looking at these books, it becomes apparent that, at any given time, a card game may be in a stable state or in a nova state. A game in a stable state is usually accorded only a brief description, perhaps incorporating a few hints on strategy: and this description will, very often, go on being reprinted, perhaps without any verbal changes, for many decades. These are the games played in the family circle, or by the peasantry or the bourgeoisie. Their devotees are likely to be conservative in their habits of play, and not much given to verbal analysis of strategy, although they may be highly skilled in play. A game goes into a nova state, on the other hand, when it is taken up by the *haut monde*: and the manifestation of this in the card-game books is extremely striking. As the game becomes more and more fashionable, the accounts given in the books become longer and longer: there are detailed discussions of strategy and analyses of sample hands. This is partly because the game has caught the attention of intellectuals and people given to making explicit analysis, and partly because proficiency at the game has become a requirement for social success in a milieu that prizes such success highly. At the same time, the game tends to undergo rapid evolution, as it is modified with the intention of making it more entertaining – more skilful or more varied; and it may also bud off a whole progeny of variant forms. All this is exemplified by Ombre, which was the greatest nova ever seen, and, at the height of its popularity in

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alsacienne, Daniel Martin ou la vie à Strasbourg au commencement du XVII^e^ siècle, ed. Charles Nerlinger, being fascicule 49 of the *Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg*, Strasbourg, 1900, the section 'Du Ioüeur de cartes' being on pp. 216-18, while the German text of the account of Trümpfspiel is quoted in Heinrich A. Rausch, *Das Spielverzeichnis im 25. Kapitel von Fischarts 'Geschichtsklitterung'*, Strasbourg, 1908, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

[5] Alain Borvo, *Anatomie d'un jeu de cartes: l'Aluette ou le Jeu de Vache*, Nantes, 1977, p. 18, cites Pierre Berloquin as advancing the same conception of a card game as a compound of constituent principles of play, each of which may be found in many other games, and as coining the term *ludèmes* for these constituent principles.

France, was occupying about half the space in the card-game books, at least if its variants are reckoned in.

It is easy to understand the reason for the enormous popularity of Ombre: it introduced card players to an entirely new and exciting principle, that of bidding. There can be no doubt that it was from Ombre that this principle entered card play: not only is it the earliest game to have involved bidding, but, as soon as the game became fashionable outside Spain, the principle of bidding was adapted to many other trick-taking games, Tarot included, which had not formerly incorporated it; and the form which bidding first took in these games was patently borrowed from the type of bidding used in Ombre, often not very well adapted to the games for which it was being borrowed. Ombre needed bidding because it was a three-handed game in which, in each round, one player – the *hombre* or man – played on his own against the other two in temporary partnership. Until the invention of Ombre, the most usual ways of playing trick-taking games were with four players, forming two fixed partnerships, as in Whist, or with three players, each playing for himself. Now, obviously, Ombre would have made a very poor game if, say, the player to the right of the dealer had always to play on his own against the other two: he would often have been resoundingly defeated, and the game would have been boring. Hence each player in turn had an opportunity to say whether he wished to undertake the role of the *hombre* or solo player in that round. This was, in origin, the simplest form of bidding imaginable: a player could either pass or elect to play on his own, and, as soon as anyone so elected, the bidding stopped. However, the principle once introduced, it was natural to make it more interesting by allowing different bids to be made, so that a player who had made a positive bid could be overbid. As time went by, an ever more elaborate code of possible bids was devised. It is worth noting, however, that the different bids did not relate to what the bidder committed himself to doing during the actual play. Once actual play began, the task of the declarer – the *hombre* – was always the same: he had to win more tricks than did either one of his opponents, taken separately. The bids related, instead, to the preliminaries preceding the actual play: to whether or not the declarer could discard worthless cards from his hand and replenish it from the stock of undealt cards, to how the trump suit was to be determined, and so on. Thus what the declarer had to do in order to win was fixed: the bids affected only the conditions under which he tried to do it. The idea of variable contracts – different things that the declarer committed himself to doing during actual play, if he was to count as winning – which figures so prominently in Bridge, did not make its appearance until Boston Whist came on to the scene at the end of the eighteenth century. It was even later that the practice of bidding was adopted in four-handed games with fixed partnerships, like Bridge: Boston Whist, whose simplified modern descendant is Solo Whist, is the only branch of the Whist family in which the principle of fixed partnerships is abandoned. For a long time, the principal point of bidding was taken to be as a means of deciding, in four-handed as well as in three- or five-handed games, which player or players should, in any one round, play against the rest in temporary partnership. Indeed, so long as the object of actual play, the way of deciding which side had won, remained constant, there could be no point in bidding in a game with fixed partnerships. Thus, surprising as it may seem to those who associated bidding primarily with Contract Bridge, trick-taking games with fixed partnerships were the last to adopt the principle of bidding introduced by Ombre; and they could do so only after that principle had been modified in Boston Whist by admitting variable contracts.

The idea of bidding is thus a European, and, specifically, a Spanish invention. According to our present hypothesis, the other leading idea, that of trumps, was invented in Italy in about 1440, with the invention of the Tarot pack. In any case, trumps, like bidding, were certainly a European invention: trumps are unknown in Oriental card games that do not derive from European ones. By contrast, the basic idea of trick-taking play itself is not of European origin. As we have seen, even when we ignore the use of trumps, trick-taking play incorporates several distinguishable elements that are nevertheless always, or almost always, associated. In Chapter 3 we imagined different conventions determining which player should lead to each trick. One was that the lead might simply rotate from one trick to the next, irrespective of who won the trick: this would parallel the invariable custom in European games concerning the deal for each round. Another was that the lead might remain with one player so long as he went on winning tricks, but then, as soon as he lost one, pass to the next player in rotation, regardless of who won the trick: this would be the analogue of the usual Chinese principle for selecting the dealer. There is no reason to think that games played in accordance with either of these rules would be strategically trivial: yet no such rule is to be found in any trick-taking game, European or Oriental; with negligibly rare exceptions, the winner of a trick always leads to the next one. We noted, also, the possibility, realised only in a tiny minority of unusual games, of alternative rules for determining by which card a trick is won: as I remarked before, these exceptions underline how predominant is the principle that (trumps excepted) only a card of the suit led can win the trick. These facts strongly suggest that trick-taking play has a single origin: that all, or nearly all, trick-taking games have evolved from some one common ancestor.

This prototype of trick-taking games, of which Bridge, Tarot, Ombre, Skat and all the rest are the descendants, must have been created before playing cards ever reached Europe. One of the leading uses for playing cards has, of course, always been as instruments of pure gambling games like Baccarat, Faro and Thirty-One, where the cards become a mere randomising device like dice or the roulette wheel. But it can hardly have been in order to play such games that playing cards were invented in the first instance, since they often ignore suit altogether, or fail to discriminate between the different ranks of court cards, and, in any case, dice are incomparably older than cards and already served perfectly as a randomising device; the pure gambling games do not exploit the true essence of playing cards as an instrument of play. If we set them aside, and consider only those games that require at least some strategic skill, we find that European card play has always been dominated by trick-taking games. If you look at any card-game book – French, English, German, Italian, Dutch or any other – published in whatever century, you will find that at least three-quarters of the games described are trick-taking ones. Almost all the card games that have enjoyed a great vogue at one time or another – almost all those that have entered or passed through a nova state – have been trick-taking games; and the same is true, with a very few exceptions like Scopa in Italy and Cribbage in England, of almost all those that have had a widespread popular following. Apart from the pure gambling games, perhaps 75 per cent of the man-hours spent in playing cards have in Europe been expended upon trick-taking games. Despite the great success of Bridge, this is less likely to be true of the twentieth century than of any period in the past, because of the popularity in modern times both of Poker and of the many forms of Rummy and its offspring Canasta: but, taken over the whole history of card games, it would be a fairly safe bet.

This makes it highly probable that trick-taking play was not independently invented in Europe, but entered, very likely in various forms, with playing cards themselves. Once it is accepted that playing cards entered Europe from outside, it is not to be supposed that they would have entered merely as instruments of possible games still to be thought up, any more than the chessboard and chess pieces would have spread without being accompanied by information about the game played with them; playing cards would have come into Europe together with a game, or, more likely, many different games, that they could be used to play. In view of the subsequent predominance of trick-taking games, it is surely to be presumed that such games were among those that entered Europe along with playing cards themselves.

We know, moreover, that by 1426 the game of Karnöffel was already being played in Germany. This was half a century after the first introduction of playing cards: but, as already remarked, it subjected the cards to an extraordinary rearrangement of their normal order; and, as we shall see, it also overlaid the basic principle that only a card of the suit led can win the trick with many and complicated exceptions. For these reasons, it cannot have been invented before the fundamental idea of trick-taking play had already long been familiar: its existence presupposes general acquaintance with that idea.

We know very little about the card games played in Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We do know, however, that there was a clearly accepted notion of the *order* of the cards within each suit: this is already apparent in John of Rheinfelden's treatise, when he speaks of the two 'marshals' as being *under* the Kings. A little reflection shows that this conception of itself implies the existence of trick-taking games. It is true that, in some games of other kinds, we need the idea of a cyclic order: for example, in any game in which a significance is attached to having three or more cards in sequence. But it is only, or at least primarily, in trick-taking games that we need an idea of the *direction* of the ordering, that is, of one card's being higher or lower than another. It might be objected that, when two sequences of equal length, held by different players, have to be compared, this can be done only by taking that sequence to beat the other which is headed by the higher-ranking card. We have seen, however, that, until about the end of the fifteenth century in Italy, and until well into the sixteenth century in Spain, it was the normal practice to treat the ranking of the numeral cards as running in one direction in Swords and Batons (the higher numeral beating the lower), and in the other direction in Cups and Coins (the lower numeral beating the higher). This practice shows that what was required was to compare the ranks of any two cards of the same suit, but not those of cards of different suits: it is easy to remember that the 4 of Cups beats the 7 of Cups, and that the 6 of Swords beat the 3 of Swords; but, as remarked, it is not so easy to remember straight off that the 4 of Cups has a higher absolute rank than the 6 of Swords, and that therefore the sequence 4-6 of Cups is superior to the sequence 4-6 of Swords. The need for a ranking within each suit, but not as between cards of the different suits, irresistibly suggests trick-taking play. It is true that we have no evidence of the practice of reversing the order in different suits in France, Germany or Switzerland (John of Rheinfelden's text is rather ambiguous, but suggests that the Ace was the lowest card of every suit); but, since it is likely that it was from Italy that playing cards spread to the rest of Europe, trick-taking games, if they had arrived together with the playing-card pack, would have followed wherever it spread.

As we have seen, this practice of reversing the order of the numeral cards in half the suits is observed, without exception, in the trick-taking games played in India under the general name of Ganjifa. This unquestionably establishes a link between the Indian games and those of Europe; and trick-taking games hold an even more predominant position among Indian than among European card games. As we have seen, the connection between Indian and European card games cannot have been direct. Direct contact between Europe and India was made for the first time since the rise of Islam by Vasco da Gama's arrival in 1498. By then, both trick-taking games and the practice of reversing the order of the numeral cards in two of the suits had demonstrably long been known in Europe, and hence cannot have been learned from Indian card players. By the early sixteenth century at the latest, and possibly two decades before the end of the fifteenth, the use of trumps in games played with the regular pack was being practised by European players, whereas, in the Ganjifa games, there is neither a trump suit nor bidding. Furthermore, as we noted before, although the Ganjifa games are full-fledged trick-taking games, with a trick being won by the highest card of the suit led and and the winner of a trick (almost always) leading to the next one, they exhibit a number of radical differences from the trick-taking games played in Europe. There are severe and often complicated constraints upon the leads that may be made; there is the basic principle that the holder of the highest outstanding card of any suit must play it when that suit is led; there is the general rule that the lead to the first trick belongs to the player holding the King of a particular suit (usually varying according to whether the game is played in the daytime or in the night-time); and there is the frequent practice of playing multiple tricks – the player with the lead puts down several cards simultaneously, and the other players have each to put down an equal number of cards. The Indian games and the European ones must have developed from some common ancestor; neither can directly have influenced the other.

It is highly probable, as we saw, that Indian playing cards, and the Indian Ganjifa games, were derived from those of Persia, where the eight-suited pack associated in India with the Moghuls was in use at least by the sixteenth century, and where similar and perhaps identical games were being played at least by the seventeenth century. There was, of course, close cultural contact between Persia and the Moghul court: Mīrzā Ṣādiq, who was born in 1018 A.H. (1610 A.D.) in Isfahan and died in 1061 A.H. (1653 A.D.) in India, devoted the 64th chapter of his Encyclopaedia to *ganjifeh*, describing various games including Hamrang, known from later

Indian sources.[6] The eight-suited pack, and probably also the Perso-Indian type of game, date back to the early sixteenth century. Further back we cannot at present go: but we saw that etymological evidence makes it likely that playing cards and card games reached Mamlūk Egypt from Persia, and that the 52-card Mamlūk pack and the 96-card Persian and Moghul pack probably have as their common ancestor a 48-card pack with four suits and two court cards per suit. The special type of game played in Persia and India therefore presumably developed in Persia at some date after playing cards first reached Egypt. This early history is, on present evidence, highly conjectural: but, if the reconstruction of history suggested here is correct in outline, the occurrence in both India and Europe of the practice of reversing the order of the numeral cards in half the suits can be explained only by supposing it to have been followed before the eight-suited pack was invented, by players in Mamlūk Egypt as well as in Persia, and to have entered Europe along with trick-taking games and with playing cards themselves. We have already noted that the disposal of the upper inscriptions on the Istanbul cards gives partial support to this hypothesis.

The predominance of trick-taking games in Europe and India is not paralleled in China. There, as we saw, setting aside pure gambling games as before, two quite different categories of card game have predominated: draw-and-discard games and what we called 'fishing' games. Draw-and-discard games were virtually unknown in Europe until this century, when Rummy games were imported from the United States, and, subsequently, Canasta from South America, and achieved great popularity. Fishing games are played in Europe in a different manner from that customary in China and Japan: there is no turning over the top card from the stock after playing a card from the hand, but, instead, there are repeated deals in the course of play; moreover, it is usually allowable to capture more than one card from the pool by the play of a single card, which never happens in the Chinese and Japanese games. In England the best-known fishing game is Casino; by far the most successful of all European fishing games is the Italian game of Scopa, with its derivatives. Fishing games have not, however, played any great role in the history of European card games; and, though I know little of their history, Scopa appears to have been already well known in Naples by the early eighteenth century, but may possibly have arrived from the Middle East.

Although there are few Chinese trick-taking games, one, the domino game *T'ien chiu* ('Heavens and Nines', so called from the name of the highest domino of the civil suit, the double six or Heaven, and of the highest dominoes of the military suit, the Nines, i.e. the 6-3 and the 5-4), is very celebrated and very ancient. The primary object of the game is to win the last trick; but how much is paid by the other players to the winner depends on how many tricks they have won. There are a few European trick-taking games in which the object is to win the last trick, for example the Swedish Femkort and the German Letzter Stich; and it is a persistent feature of many games, going back at least to Trappola and some forms of Tarot in early sixteenth-century Italy, that the winner of the last trick gains a bonus. In the present state of knowledge, we can only speculate whether *T'ien chiu* is a remote ancestor of the trick-taking games played in Persia, India and Europe, or whether the principle of trick-taking play was invented twice independently.

Whatever the exact truth on these questions may be, it seems certain that trick-taking games are older than the use of playing cards in Europe, and perhaps as old as the four-suited pack itself; and, since trumps are an unknown phenomenon in any game not demonstrably derivable from a European forebear, we may confidently assert that they, like bidding and unlike the general trick-taking principle, represent a European contribution to the art of card games. As for the idea of complex trick-taking games, it is impossible to be certain. No known trick-taking game of non-European origin is complex in our technical sense, although it is a regular feature of fishing games that different cards captured bear different point-values; we might, therefore, conclude that the trick-taking games that entered Europe along with playing cards were all simple ones, and that the idea of assigning different point-values to cards according to their rank first arose in Europe. On the other hand, it is highly tempting to associate the distinction between high-scoring cards and low cards with that between court cards and numeral cards. Familiar as we are with the latter distinction, we forget how curious it is. But, when we reflect, when, say, we recall the Eton platoon, we are impelled to ask why anyone should have thought of continuing a numerical sequence with three social or political ranks. It would be a satisfying solution if we could argue as follows. A difference in the type of design which a card displays is likely to point to a difference in its role in the games for which it was originally devised; and an elaborate design is likely to point to an important role. In a simple trick-taking game, and, indeed, in most card games, the court cards, even when they head the suit, differ from the numeral cards only in respect of their higher rank: it would be in no way inappropriate to their function if they were replaced by numerals from 11 to 13. It is only in complex trick-taking games that the higher cards of each suit differ in role from the lower ones otherwise than just by being higher. If, therefore, we hypothesise a prototypical complex trick-taking game in which the court cards were the highest cards in each suit and the only cards with high point-values, as in fact they are in Quarante des Rois, we have an explanation for the differentiation between court cards and numeral cards: court cards were given special designs because they played a special role in the game. This idea is enticing; unfortunately, what little evidence there is tells against it. If that were ever the rationale for the distinction between court cards and numeral cards, it had been completely forgotten by the time that the eight-suit pack and the Indo-Persian Ganjifa games played with it were invented. Furthermore, we have seen it to be probable that there were originally only two court cards per suit, and possibly, in the first instance, only one: and a complex game with only two high-scoring cards out of twelve, and no trumps, would be distinctly tame. We have, therefore, reluctantly to abandon this attractive idea. Complex trick-taking games may have entered Europe together with playing cards, or they may have been invented in Europe at an early date, perhaps prompted by the distinction between court and numeral cards; but, in either case, they probably do not have an antiquity equal to that of simple trick-taking games. This conclusion tends to reinforce the hypothesis that, in the beginning, the King was the only court card, acquiring first one subordinate and then a second: it would be less bizarre, at the time when the four-suited pack was first devised, to head every suit with a single figure card than with a sequence of them.

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[6] The Encyclopaedia is called *Shāhid-i Ṣādiq*, and its ch. 64 is discussed by 'Ali Naqī Manzavī in 'Ganjafeh-ye Shāhid-i Sādiq', *Dānesh*, no. 8, October 1954, pp. 459-60. Hamrang is described in 'A note on Ganjpa', by the Maharaja of Sonepur, *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, vol. 10, 1924, pp. 221-6.

We may regard it as certain that trumps are a European invention; it does not follow that it was with the game of Tarot that they made their first appearance. Is there any positive evidence for this hypothesis, apart from the plausible explanation that it provides of why the Tarot pack was invented at all? Here etymology proves once more a clue. As has been said, the name used in Italy throughout the fifteenth century, right down to 1500, for Tarot cards and for the game played with them is *trionfi* or *triumphi*. In the sixteenth century, however, from at least 1516, this name was replaced by the word *tarocchi*, whose etymology is unknown and already perplexed people in the sixteenth century.[7] From early in the same century, however, we find names cognate with 'triumph' being used, in several countries, for games played with the regular pack. In France there is Triomphe, a game still played, or at least described in the card-game books, to this day.[8] In England there is Triumph, first referred to in 1522, and next in a sermon by Latimer preached in 1529.[9] In Spain there was Triunfo, of which the first mention was by J.L. Vives in 1539.[10] The German game of Trumpffen, perhaps the same as the Trümpfspiel described by Daniel Martin in 1637, appears in the list of games given by Fischart in his translation of Rabelais in 1575.[11] As for Italy itself, Francesco Berni alluded to Trionfi as a game played with regular cards, and distinct from Tarocchi, which he refers to under that name, in 1526, and it has other mentions in sixteenth-century Italian sources.[12] These games were by no means all identical; on the contrary, they differed greatly. Daniel Martin's Trümpfspiel was a complex game, whereas the other games are all simple ones: in Triomphe each player received only five cards, whereas the English game of Triumph was the ancestor of Whist, and the entire pack was distributed. What, then, explains this allocation to a variety of trick-taking games played with the regular pack of a name formerly applied to the game played with the very special pack of cards now known as *tarocchi*?

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[7] Lollio, in his *Invettiva* of 1550, spoke of 'quel nome fantastico, e bizarro/Di Tarocco, senz'ethimologia' (that fantastic and bizarre name of 'Tarocco', devoid of etymology).

[8] The earliest French reference which is certainly to this game, and not to Tarot, is, as so often, in Rabelais's list of the games of Gargantua, *Gargantua*, 1534, book I, ch. 22; Rabelais spells it *triumphe*, and includes *tarau* separately in the list.

[9] The earlier reference is from Henry Watson, *The chirche of the euyll men and women/ whereof Lucyfer is the heed/ and the membres is all the players dyssolute and synners reproued.* This was a translation of *La Petite Dyablerie dont Lucifer est le chef* by Thomas Varnet and Noel Beda which had previously been published in Paris, itself an abridged and adapted translation of the sermon *De alearum ludo* by St Bernardine of Siena. At the end of *The chirche of the euyll men and women* the date is given as 22 August 1511, though it is not quite clear to me whether this is meant to be the date of the translation or of the work translated. The British Library gives the date of *La Petite Dyablerie* in its catalogue as '1520?', and that of Henry Watson's translation, of which it has a microfilm of a copy in the Cambridge University Library, as 1522. There is another, anonymous, translation, differing only in trifling variations in wording, entitled *The churche of yuell men &*

The explanation is very simple. What connects all these different games is that they were games played with trumps: their names refer to this outstanding and, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, novel feature of them. The word 'trump' is simply a corruption of 'triumph', a corruption that appears almost as early as the parent word 'triumph', as applied to cards, and soon supersedes it. Similarly, *Trumpf* is an ordinary German word for 'trump', as *triunfo* is in Spanish, although in French the word most commonly used has long been *atout*. In Italy, the word *trionfi* continued very often to be applied to the triumph cards of the Tarot pack, as well as to trump cards in other games, although it was no longer used for Tarot cards as a whole, or for the game played with them: in fact, it simply acquired the meaning 'trumps', and, now that we know for what purpose the triumph cards are used in play, we may as well simply call them 'trumps' henceforward. Even before the word *tarocchi* had been introduced, when the word *trionfi* was reserved for Tarot cards, it had a certain ambiguity; it could be applied to the cards of the Tarot pack as a whole, but it denoted more particularly the twenty-one cards we have been calling triumph cards, or those together

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women/ wherof Lucyfere is heed. And the membres is all the players dissolute/ and synners reproued. The first page of this says that it has been 'trāslated out of frenche in to Englisshe/ at the instaūce of Charles erle of Worcester/ and chāberlayne to our soueraygne lorde the Kyng'. Charles Somerset, who was Chamberlain to the Household of Henry VIII, was created Earl of Worcester in 1514, and died in 1526. Both the French and the English versions substitute different games for those mentioned by St Bernardine. On p. 10 of Watson's book there occurs the passage 'there is seuen specyalles/ whiche is/ the momon/ the gleke/ the flusshe/ the torment/ the regnet/ one and thyrty(and y^{e} tryumphe'. The names of all these card games are known from other sources. The French original of this passage gives the seven games as 'le mommo/ le glic/ le flux/ le tourment/ la regnette/ Trente et Vng/ & la ronfle'. It would therefore appear that Watson is equating 'ronfle' with 'tryumphe', but this impression is contradicted by an earlier sentence on the same page: 'the players shall saye/ playe we at the romfle/ the other shal saye playe we at the tryumphe'; at this point in the original French, different games are mentioned ('les ioueurs diront iouōs au glic. Lautre dira iouons aux flux'). Although this is only a translation, it seems clear that 'tryumphe' must have been known in England as the name of a card game. For Latimer's sermon, in which allegorical use is made of the words 'triumph' and 'heart', see Hugh Latimer, *Sermons on the Card*, London, 1886, p. 27, and John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 1563, pp. 1297-8 and 1300 (col. 2): 'the game that wee wyll playe at, shall bee called the triumphe.'

[10] *Linguae latinae exercitatio J.L. Vivis Valentini*, Basle, 1541, Dialogus xxi, 'Ludus Chartarum seu foliorum'. The first edition of this book, of which there are very many, was published in Basle in 1538. S.R. Kaplan, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, New York, 1978, states that 'Ludovico Vives, writing in 1545 in *Ludus Chartarum, Dialogus*, describes the method of playing the game of *tarocchi*' (p. 28) and that this work 'contains one of the earliest published references to the game of tarocchi' (p. 374). This is an error: Vives died in 1540, and the dialogue refers to a game with the regular pack, as might be expected of a Spaniard. In the Spanish dictionary of John Minsheu, one of the meanings of the word *triumfo* or *triumpho* is given as 'a game at cards so called': see *A Dictionarie in Spanish and English*, by Richard Percivale, enlarged by I. Minsheu, London, 1599, reprinted 1623, s.v. 'triumfo'. In the *Dialogues* in Spanish and English appended to the dictionary, *el triúnfo* figures as the name of a card game and is translated 'Trump' (p. 25, towards the end of the 3rd dialogue). The dialogue later refers to a distinct game called *triunfo callàdo*, translated as 'still trump'; I do not know what this is. The *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana, o Española* of Don Sebastian Cobarruvias, Madrid, 1611, gives *un juego de naipes, que llaman triunfo* (a game of cards which they call *triunfo*) as one of the meanings of *triunfo*.

[11] Johann Fischart, *Geschichtklitterung, Gargantua*, ed. U. Nyssen, Düsseldorf, 1963, gives the text of the 1590 edition. See also the work by Rausch cited in footnote 3.

[12] F. Berni, *Capitolo del Gioco della Primiera*, Venice, 1526. The game is also mentioned by Girolamo Cardano in ch. XXV of his *Liber de Ludo Aleae*, written in 1564, published in *Hieronymi Cardani Mediolanensis Opera Omnia*, tom. 1, Lyons, 1663, pp. 262-76; see also S.W. Singer, *Researches into the History of Playing Cards*, London, 1816, pp. 328-31, and Oystein Ore, *Cardano, the Gambling Scholar*, Princeton, 1953, appendix. It was also discussed in a lost Italian work of Cardano's, *De Ludis*, of 1524; see his *Liber de Libris Propriis*, in *Opera Omnia*, tom. 1, pp. 60-95, particularly p. 61 (col. 2).

with the Matto; a set of Tarot cards was more properly called *carte da trionfi*, 'cards with triumphs'. The word *tarocchi* inherited the same ambiguity.

These facts all but compel us to make the following supposition. Somewhere around the end of the fifteenth century, it occurred to some Italian card players that the idea of trumps, which hitherto had been the distinguishing feature of the game of Tarot, in which special cards were used for the purpose, could be adapted to games played with the regular pack by simply designating one of the suits as trumps. This idea then spread rapidly to many other countries, travelling much faster and more widely than the game of Tarot itself, just because it did not require a special pack of cards not everywhere readily obtainable. The word used particularly for the trump cards in Tarot was very naturally transferred to trump cards in these new games, necessitating the introduction of a new word for Tarot cards as such; and, since the new idea of trumps appeared to card players the distinctive feature of the various games, the same word was employed as the name of the games themselves. This hypothesis is reinforced if we accept Miss Moakley's conjecture about the origin of the word *trionfi* or *triumphi* as applied to the Tarot trumps. Many have suggested that the word was adopted because a trump card 'triumphs' over any card of a (plain) suit; but, on Miss Moakley's view, the word had originally an iconographical significance, deriving from a conception of the figures on the Tarot trumps as belonging to one of those processions of allegorical or mythological figures on floats that delighted Italian Renaissance courts; such processions, whimsically modelled upon the triumphal processions of ancient Rome, were ordinarily referred to as 'triumphs'. I view this conjecture as plausible, not as established; but, if it is correct, it would follow that, when the Tarot pack was invented, the word *triumphi* was not yet in use for trump cards in other games. If the idea of trumps had at that time been embodied in games with the regular pack, it would have been surprising if whatever word were then used for 'trumps' in such games had not, at least sometimes, been applied to the trump cards of the Tarot pack; yet there is no trace of any such word. In any case, it is beyond question that, at around 1500, a word formerly reserved exclusively for Tarot cards was borrowed for games played with the regular pack, and rapidly came to mean simply 'trumps'; and this would be virtually inexplicable if trick-taking games with trumps had been played with the regular pack since before the Tarot pack was first invented.

Even if we accept this hypothesis, there is a problem in determining the date at which the idea of trumps was first transferred from Tarot to games played with the regular pack. Were it not for some fifteenth-century French references to the game of *triomphe* or *triumphe*, we should naturally place the innovation in the first decade of the sixteenth century. We have already mentioned a French reference to *le triumphe* as a card game dating from 1482, however, as well as Duke René II's game of *triumphe* in 1496.[13] Now France was the first country to which the game of Tarot spread from Italy, and we know from Rabelais's references to it in 1534 that it was already quite well known by then. Rabelais also refers to *la triumphe*, which thus obviously was for him a game played with the regular pack; there are other sixteenth-century French references to Triomphe, and, since the game is described in the seventeenth-century card-game books, we can be confident that what Rabelais is referring to is that game of Triomphe which has survived, with very little change, down to the present. But, in 1482 or even 1496, the game of Tarot was still being referred to in Italy as *trionfi*, and the word *tarocchi* was, so far as we know, not yet in use. The fifteenth-century references to *triumphe* could, therefore, equally well refer to Tarot. We have to choose between the hypotheses, both mildly surprising, that the Tarot pack and the game of Tarot had already reached France by 1482, and that, by that date, the crucial step had already been taken of adapting the idea of trumps to games with the regular pack; this latter step must originally have been taken in Italy rather than in France, unless, indeed, we are prepared to assume that *both* hypotheses hold good.

Our theory that the triumph cards of the Tarot pack were devised in order to play what was then a wholly new role in trick-taking games, that of trumps, and that this idea was subsequently borrowed from the game of Tarot and adapted to games played with the regular pack, can be sustained only in the absence of any evidence for games, of equal antiquity with Tarot, played with the regular pack but involving trumps. We must therefore consider carefully two possible claimants for such a position. The first is the Italian game of Ronfa. In his book *Gambling*, Mr Alan Wykes informs us that '*Triumph, ruff, ombre* and *honors* were all built round the idea of trumping, and are all developments of *ronfa*, an early sixteenth-century Italian game in which the leading player could decide to his own advantage which should be the superior or trump suit in play ... Ronfa, like ombre, was usually a game for two.'[14] If this information were sound, Mr Wykes, or the 'professional researchers' who assisted him, might have succeeded in identifying that Italian game in which the idea of trumps was first adapted from Tarot to play with the regular pack. Unfortunately, the game of Ronfa is older than the early sixteenth century, probably far older. The first reference known to me from an Italian source occurs in the same sermon by an anonymous Dominican friar, dating from between 1450 and 1480, which we have already cited as giving the first listing of the Tarot triumphs.[15] There are here two mentions of Ronfa, as if to two separate games: one is specifically to a card game ('Ronfa, ludus cartularum'), and the other to a game bearing the alternative name of Buffa Aragiato, which may equally well have been a dice game or game of tables (i.e. backgammon game);[16] the whole passage is one in which names of card games, dice games and backgammon games are indiscriminately jumbled together as being, according to the preacher, names of devils. Of the game of Buffa Aragiato or Ronfa, the preacher comments that 'it is a cruel game, that has led many to poverty'; so it was certainly a game played for high stakes. Whether or not there was also a backgammon game called Ronfa, the card game was well established in Italy by the 1490s: in 1491 *ronfae* was prohibited by municipal edict in Bergamo;[17] in 1492 a letter of Ippolito d'Este acknowledged the receipt, among other things, of a pack of cards for playing the game (*carte da rompha*);[18] in 1499 the *Diario Ferrarese* mentioned *Rompha* as among the games played at the court of Ferrara.[19] There are frequent references to it in sixteenth-century Italian sources.[20]

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[13] Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française, Complément*, Paris, vol. X, 1902, s.v. 'triomphe', quotes the phrase *jouer au jeu du Triumphe* from a manuscript of 1482, JJ 206, folio 181 r° in the Archives Nationales. For René II's game, see H.-R. D'Allemagne, *Les Cartes à jouer*, vol. II, Paris, 1906, p. 212.

If we take the date of the anonymous sermon against gaming to be at the extreme end of the interval, 1450-80, to which Robert Steele dated it, that could just be consistent both with our theory that the idea of trumps was taken over from Tarot into other games, and with Mr Wykes's contention that Ronfa was a trick-taking game with trumps. However, although everything concerning the game of Ronfa is obscure, it seems highly probable that we should identify it with the game played in France under the name of Ronfle. But, if so, it goes back to the beginning of the fifteenth century: the earliest reference to Ronfle in Godefroy's dictionary is from 1414, with another from 1464.[21] If Ronfa and Ronfle are to be equated, and if Mr Wykes is correct in saying that Ronfa was a game involving a trump suit, our theory about the origin of the Tarot pack is in ruins.

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[14] Alan Wykes, *Gambling*, London, 1964, p. 165. I know of no game called 'Honors' or 'Honours'; but a stage in the evolution of Triumph into modern Whist was a game called Ruff and Honours, described in Charles Cotton, *The Compleat Gamester*, London, 1674, pp. 114-20. The sentence should therefore probably be emended to begin '*Triumph, Ruff and Honours* and *Ombre* were all ...'.

[15] Robert Steele, 'A notice of the Ludus Triumphorum', *Archaeologia*, vol. LVII, 1900, pp. 185-200; see also the same author's 'Early playing cards', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, vol. XLIX, 1901, pp. 317-23.

[16] The famous manuscript compiled in 1283 at the order of King Alfonso X the Wise of Castile on chess, dice, backgammon and board games mentions *buffa cortesa* and *buffa de baldrace* as backgammon games: see Alfonso el Sabio, *Libros de Acedrex, Dados e Tablas (Das Schachzabelbuch König Alfons des Weisen)*, ed. and trans. by Arnald Steiger, Geneva and Zurich, 1941, pp. 324-5, 328-9.

[17] See W.L. Schreiber, *Die ältesten Spielkarten*, Strasbourg, 1937, p. 79.

[18] See Giulio Bertoni, 'Tarocchi versificati' in *Poesie, leggende, costumanze del medio evo*, Modena, 1917, p. 218.

[19] See Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. XXIV, p. 376.

[20] See the works of Berni and Cardano cited in footnote 11.

[21] Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française*, Paris, vol. 7, 1892, s.v. 'ronfle'. The 1414 reference is from a manuscript, cited merely as Arch. JJ. 189, pièce 266: 'Lesquelz compaignons commencerent a jouer au jeu de ronfle.' The 1464 one is cited from the *Lettres de Jehan de Lannoy*, in *Cabinet historique*, 1875, p. 241: 'Comme l'on dist, l'on joue aux cartes pour passer le temps, est a savoir a le roufle, a XXXI, au ghelicque, au hanequin et au franc ju.' There are other references without precise dates: one of 1537, given as 'Chicheface', *Poésie des XV*^{e} *et XVI*^{e} *siècles*, vol. XI, p. 290, employs the term *roffle* not as the name of a game but as a technical term in another card game, la Picardie: 'J'avais cinquante et cinq de roffle/ En jouant a la Picardie.' I am afraid I have not checked these references.

As we saw concerning the alleged fourteenth-century Persian references to Ās-Nās, and the supposed entry in the diary of one of Columbus's seamen,[22] Mr Wykes is better at making assertions than at substantiating them. It would be a matter of the greatest interest for the history of card games to find out with certainty how Ronfa (or Ronfle) was played: but a request to Mr Wykes for references to support his confident statement on the subject failed to elicit the most tenuous ground for it. The fact of the matter is that the evidence that has come down to us on the question is confusing, and points in opposite directions. The word *ronfa*, and the word *ronfle* as used in card play, are certainly connected with the English word 'ruff', still in regular use by Bridge players as a verb meaning to play a trump card to a trick to which a plain suit has been led. By the seventeenth century, Triumph had evolved into two forms, described by Charles Cotton, one called Ruff and Honours, or, alternatively, Slamm, and the other called Whist. In Whist, as then played, the 2s were omitted from the pack, and every player received twelve cards, the last being turned to determine the trump suit. In Ruff and Honours, each player again received twelve cards, but the last four were dealt to the centre of the table to form a stock, the top one being turned to determine trumps; the player who held the Ace of trumps was entitled to take the four cards of the stock into his hand, discarding four at his choice. The procedure of taking the four cards of the stock was called 'ruffing'.[23] Cotton does not use the word 'ruff' as meaning 'to trump'; but he does describe the French game of Triomphe under the name 'French-Ruff'.[24] John Florio, in his Italian/English dictionary of 1598, gives 'Ronfa' as meaning 'a game at cardes called ruffe or trumpe', and the verb 'ronfare' as meaning 'to snort, to snarle (the 1611 edition adds 'in sleep') ...; also to ruff or trump at cards'.[25] *Ronfare* is not in use in modern Italian in either sense, but the more general meaning given by Florio confirms the identification of Ronfa with Ronfle, *ronfler* being the ordinary French word for 'to snore'. Randle Cotgrave, in his French/English dictionary of 1611, gives 'Ronfle' as meaning 'Hand-Ruffe, at Cards'.[26] All this naturally supports the view that Ronfa or Ronfle was a trick-taking game whose outstanding feature was the use of a trump suit.

The word 'ruff' was, however, also used in card play in a quite different sense. In Piquet and some other games there is a score for the *point*, that is, for having the greatest number of cards of any one suit, or, in case of equality, that having the highest total value (the Ace counting 11, the court cards 10 each and the others their face values). The word *ronfle* regularly appears in the older French dictionaries as meaning the 'point' in Piquet, though later supplanted by the word *point*; and Cotton uses 'Ruff' in this sense too.[27] The eighteenth-century French writer on playing cards, Bullet, uses the term *ronfle* only in this sense, without mentioning the game of Ronfle.[28] A Spanish encyclopaedia of 1926 assigns the same general meaning to the word *runfla*, though without a specific mention of Piquet.[29] Boiteau d'Ambly, in his book of 1854, discussed the game of Ronfle, and said that it was still played in the Vosges: according to him, it was, as played there, a very simple two-handed game, in which the sole object was to have the highest *ronfle* or point, taken as consisting in the highest sum of values of cards of any one suit held in hand.[30] The authoritative Italian dictionary, the *Vocabolario della Crusca* of 1612, gives as a proverbial phrase *accusare la ronfa: accusare* is a verb commonly used in card play to mean 'to declare' some advantageous combination of cards held in hand, and the entry goes on to say that Ronfa is a card game similar to Primiera.[31] Primiera was a game very popular in Italy in the early sixteenth century, originating, like so many card games, in Spain, where it was called Primero, under which name it also enjoyed great popularity in

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[22] See Chapter 3, p. 46 and fns 41 and 42, and p. 51.

[23] Charles Cotton, op. cit., pp. 114-20.

[24] Ibid., pp. 121-2.

[25] John Florio, *The Worlde of Wordes*, London, 1598.

[26] Randle Cotgrave, *A dictionarie of the French and English tongues*, London, 1611.

[27] Op. cit., p. 82.

[28] Jean Baptiste Bullet, *Recherches historiques sur les cartes à jouer*, Lyons, 1757, p. 144.

[29] *Enciclopedia Universal Illustrada Europeo-Americana*, Bilbao, Madrid and Barcelona, vol. LII, 1926, s.v. 'runfla': 'reunión de muchas cartas de un mismo palo'.

[30] Boiteau d'Ambly, *Les Cartes à jouer et la cartomancie*, Paris, 1854, p. 162.

[31] *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, Venice, 1612, s.v. 'accusare': 'E proverbialmente, Accusar la ronfa giusta, che è confessar la verità per l'appunto. E Ronfa è giuoco di carte, come Primiera e simili' (Proverbially, 'to declare the true *ronfa*', that is, to confess the truth exactly. Ronfa is a game of cards like Primiera and similar ones).

England. It was not a trick-taking game, but belonged to the same general category as Poker, being a gambling game whose outcome depended on the particular combinations of cards each player held in his hand.

It is plain that two totally different ideas, that of trumps and that of the point, became associated with the words *ronfa* and 'ruff'. The difficulty is to know which of these two associations is the original one; which one characterised the game of Ronfa as it is referred to in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Here Randle Cotgrave's translation of 'Ronfle' as 'Hand-Ruffe' may give us a clue: his entry for 'Triomphe' is 'The Card-game called Ruffe, or Trump; also, the Ruffe, or Trump at it'. By the time he compiled his dictionary, the confusion between the two senses of 'ruff' had already set in: and his phrase 'Hand-Ruffe' may well have been intended to differentiate a game in which the ruff was the point on cards held in hand from one in which it consisted in the play of a trump card. In 1534 Rabelais mentioned both Ronfle and Triumphe in his list of games: and his English translator, Urquhart, of 1653 likewise rendered the former as 'handruff', while he translated the latter as 'trump'.[32] That, in England at least, the name 'Ruff' originally denoted a game in which 'ruff' meant 'point' seems to be clinched by one of the earliest English references to Ruff as a card game, in the contribution of 1589 to the Martin Marprelate controversy called *Martins Months minde* and dubiously attributed to Thomas Nashe. The author says, in a passage whose metaphorical intention escapes me, 'They are now in hande to shuffle the Cardes (as ill as they will seem to love them) and to confounde all, to amende their badde games, having never a good Carde in their handes, and leaving the auncient game of England (Trumpe) where everie coate and sute are sorted in their degree, are running to their Ruffe where the greatest sorte of the sute carrieth away the game'.[33] This passage is far from clear: but it is apparent that the writer is not using 'Ruff', as was later done, as an alternative name for the game of Trump or Triumph, but as standing for a quite different game; and the concluding remark fits well with the idea that the game referred to was one in which the winner was he who held the longest single suit in his hand.

It thus seems more probable than anything else that Ronfa was not originally a trick-taking game at all, or, at any rate, not one played with trumps, but one in which the point – as determined either by the mere number, or by the sum total of the values, of cards of one suit held in hand – played an important role; and that the verbs *ronfare* and *trionfare*, as applied in card games, later became confused owing to their similarity of sound, leading to a similar confusion between the English terms 'ruff' and 'trump' derived from them.[34] This confusion can be clearly seen in John Florio's dictionary: the two verbs seem to have been still further confused with the verb *tronfiare*, meaning 'to puff oneself up'. Florio gives *tronfio* as meaning 'puffed, swolne; ... also a trump at cards, a game at cards called trumpe', and *tronfare*, also spelled *tronfiare*, as meaning 'to puffe, to swell ...; also to trump at cardes', with the 1611 edition giving as a further meaning 'to snort' (the basic meaning of *ronfare*). The confusion seems to have become pretty thorough. A game called Trionfetti was already in existence in Italy in 1564, when, as Triumfeti, it was mentioned by Cardano in addition to the game of Triumphi, both being distinct from Tarocchi, which is referred to by Cardano under that name;[35] Trionfetti may be the game mentioned by Francesco Berni in 1526 under the name Trionfipiccoli, again as distinct both from Trionfi and from Tarocchi.[36] From one later account, however, it appears that Trionfetti was not a trick-taking game at all; played by four players in fixed partnerships with a full or a 32-card pack, it allows scores for pairs, for threes of a kind and for the point (*punto*), taken as the sum of values of the cards held in any one suit.[37]

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[32] See F. Rabelais, *The heroic deeds of Gargantua and Pantagruel*, trans. Sir Thomas Urquhart and P. le Motteux, Everyman edition, vol. I, London, 1929, p. 50, or many other editions.

[33] See *The Complete Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. by Alexander B. Grosart, vol. I, 1883-4, pp. 141-205; the quoted passage is on p. 161.

[34] An important, but puzzling, use of the term *ronfa*, not as the name of a game, but as a technical term in play, occurs in the *Invettiva contra il Giuoco del Taroco* of 1550 by Alberto Flavio Lollio (1508-1568) of Ferrara; this poem will be discussed in detail in Chapter 21. Speaking of the moment before play opens when you inspect your hand, Lollio says, 's'hai quattro,/ O cinque Carte di Ronfa, tu temi/ Che non ti muoia il Re, con le figure' ('if you have four or five cards of *ronfa*, you are afraid that you will lose the King, with the court cards'). *Carte de Ronfa* does not mean 'trumps', for which Lollio uses the term *trionfi*. He is speaking of a three-handed game with the Tarot pack, in which each player has a hand of twenty cards. The most natural interpretation is that Lollio is speaking of a long holding in a plain suit, which is called *ronfa*; it you have the top four or five cards of that suit, you are afraid that they may be trumped by another player who has a void in that suit. I do not feel sure, however, that this is the correct interpretation.

[35] Cardano, *Liber de Ludo Aleae*, cap. XXV; see footnote 11. The game is also mentioned by Tomaso Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale*, Venice, 1585, as *trionfitti*; see p. 574 of the 1586 edition. John Florio, *A Worlde of Wordes*, London, 1598,

It is noteworthy that we have no evidence for the use of the French word *ronfle*, or of Spanish *runfla* or Portuguese *rufa*, with the meaning 'trump': Godefroy cites two sixteenth-century metaphorical uses, one from Rabelais, of the phrase *en ronfle vue* to mean 'in a good position', which would tally well with its literal meaning being that of a successful point displayed to the opponents. In view of the priority of the French references over the Italian ones, it is likely that the game was of French origin and was imported into Italy, the name 'Ronfle' being there converted into 'Ronfa'. Ronfle need not be thought to have been so unsophisticated a game as that mentioned by Boiteau d'Ambly: it could even have been ancestral to Piquet. Piquet is referred to by Rabelais under its older name of *Cent* (the game being played 100 up), which in England was corrupted to 'Sant'. Being a game played with a shortened pack (originally with the 36-card pack), it is unlikely to have originated before 1500, and certainly cannot be as old as Ronfle. Piquet is a simple trick-taking game without trumps, in which the importance of the play in tricks is overlaid by that of the declarations that can be made from hand before play begins: these features are entirely consonant with its being, or having been descended from, a game going back to a very early stage in the history of European card play, since trick-taking games without trumps are probably as old in Europe as playing cards themselves, and declarations made from hand seem also to be very ancient. Ronfle may well have been a game of the same general type.

However this may be, it is evident that, although at first sight Ronfa poses a problem for our theory about the origin of the Tarot pack, that problem evaporates upon examination. The discovery of some really solid evidence about how Ronfle and Ronfa were played in the fifteenth century is, indeed, much to be desired; but, in default of any more convincing reasons than we have at present, we cannot with any assurance classify them as trick-taking games, let alone ones played with trumps.

A more serious problem is raised by the game of Karnöffel, which was a celebrated game in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Germany. It goes back to quite early in the fifteenth century, having been listed in a municipal ordinance of Nördlingen in 1426 as among the games that could lawfully be played at the annual city fête.[38] A thorough investigation of the history of the game has been carried out by Dr Rudolf von Leyden, who has collected some thirty references to it from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Of these, eight are from the works of the famous Catholic preacher Bishop Johann Geiler of Kaisersberg. For him it provided an apt illustration of the disruption of the social order. In the usual card games, the cards in each suit ranked in a natural and determinate order, with the King at the head, and the higher-numbered cards beating the lower-numbered ones, the Deuce ranking last. But in Karnöffel, which Geiler mistakenly regarded as a new game, all was topsy-turvey. During the Reformation, Karnöffel, containing, as it did, cards known as the Pope, the Emperor (Kaiser) and the Devil, became the source for a more substantial allegory by Protestant propagandists and satirists.

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defines *Trionfetti* as 'a game at cardes as our trump'; in his *Second Frutes* of 1591 he had translated *triumphetto* as 'trump'. In the 1659 edition of Florio's dictionary, *A Dictionary Italian and English*, revised by Giovanni Torriano, the entry for *Trionfetto* is 'the game Trump, or Ruff, or Whisk at Cards'; 'Whisk' is just an alternative form of 'Whist', but it seems very unlikely that Whist was played in Italy in the seventeenth century.

[36] F. Berni, op. cit.

[37] Aquarius (i.e. Louis d'Aguilar Jackson), *Italian Games at Cards and Oriental Games*, pp. 49-52. Aquarius equates Trionfetti with Gilé, a game separately referred to by Garzoni, *gilé* being the technical term for a pair. Aquarius, or L. d'A. Jackson, was an engineer who was an enthusiast for foreign card games, and published a number of small booklets about them, which, unfortunately, are far from always accurate or clear; he frequently follows very closely a German or Italian text, which he does not in all cases interpret correctly. In this case, I do not know what his source was, and have been unable to find any Italian-language account of Trionfetti. I have no doubt that, in some source available to Aquarius, Trionfetti was described as a non-trick-taking game of the kind he describes; but it may well be that the game referred to by Cardano, Garzoni and Florio was a trick-taking game with trumps.

[38] W.L. Schreiber, *Die ältesten Spielkarten*, Strasbourg, 1937, pp. 42-3.

After the sixteenth century, Karnöffel lost its celebrity, and passed out of the consciousness of most card players. But it by no means died out: it continued to be played, in varying forms, in isolated rural areas of Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands, and is still played in Switzerland to this day; of all European card games still living, it must be that with the longest demonstrable history. The earliest detailed account of the manner of play comes from an article published in a German periodical of 1783, describing Karniffel as then played amongst the Thuringian peasantry.[39] Dr von Leyden has unearthed three others: one published in Lucerne in 1841, describing Karnöffel or Kaiserspiel as then played in the German-speaking Catholic cantons of Switzerland; one from a German periodical of 1924, describing the Karnüffeln or Knüffeln then played in Friesland; and a book of rules for the game of Kaiser-Spiel or Kaiserjass (Chaisere) as now played in the half-canton of Nidwalden, together with a very recent description by Herr Hansjakob Achermann published in a local journal.[40] The original game was played with a full 48-card German-suited pack. In Thuringia it was played with a 36-card one, and in Friesland with a French-suited pack of 48 cards. In Switzerland it is played with the Swiss-suited pack. In the nineteenth-century Lucerne version, all 48 cards were used; this must have been the last game for which they were required. But the modern game uses a 40-card pack, missing the 8s and 9s; for the few places in which this ancient game survives, the 48-card Swiss-suited pack continues to be manufactured. Dr von Leyden, Mr John McLeod and Mr David Baird have all visited Stans to witness this venerable game being played.

The games described in these various sources differ considerably from one another, but share several common features. All are simple trick-taking games with trumps. The Swiss games are those of which we have the most detailed descriptions: the modern game as played in Nidwalden differs from the nineteenth-century one in certain ways, but the essential features are in common. The Thuringian and Frisian versions have the surprising feature of having *two* trump suits, while the Swiss forms have only one. In the Thuringian and Frisian games, the trump suits are determined by turning the first two undealt cards; if both are of the same suit, another is turned, and so on until two suits have been exposed. In the Swiss games, each player receives one card face up in the first round of the deal, and the lowest card (according to the ranking in plain suits) so dealt (in case of equality, the earlier) fixes the trump suit. The game is characteristically played with four or with six players in two fixed partnerships; usually each player is dealt five cards, and that side wins the round which makes three tricks (once either side has done so, the remaining tricks are not played out). In the Frisian game, there are four players in two fixed partnerships, but each player receives nine cards, the object of each side being to make five tricks; the nineteenth-century Swiss form provides versions for three players or for four, each playing for himself, and in these cases the winner of a round is the first to obtain three tricks, each player receiving as many cards as required to ensure that someone wins (seven in the three-handed version, nine in the four-handed one). In no form of the game is there an obligation to follow suit, nor a prohibition on trumping although able to follow suit. In the Thuringian game and in the Swiss nineteenth-century one when played with three players or with four, each playing for himself, it was obligatory for each player to beat the highest card yet played if he could (with a card of the suit led or with a trump): in Swiss partnership games and in the Frisian game, there are no constraints on play to a trick. In all forms, open discussion between the players is lawful, or each side has a director who instructs his partner or partners what to play.

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[39] 'Beytrag zur Geschichte der Kartenspiele', *Teutscher Merkur*, 1783, pp. 62-87.

[40] *Das uralte edele so genannte Karnöffel- oder Kaiserspiel*, Lucerne, 1841; J.F. Berhard, 'Das Karnüffeln (Knüffeln). Ein friesisches Kartenspiel', *Die Heimat: Monatsschrift des Vereins zur Pfelege der Natur- und Landeskunde in Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Lübeck und dem Fürstentum Lübeck*, March 1924, reprinted (pp. 22-4) at the end of G. Erhardt, 'Das Karniffel- oder Karnöffelspiel', *Der Alte*, 5th Jahrgang, Altenburg, 1930, pp. 20-2; and *Jassreglement für das Kaiser-Spiel*, n.d., issued by J. Müller & Cie. of Schaffhausen, together with Hansjakob Achermann, 'Der Kaiserjass, wie er heute in Nidwalden gespielt wird'. Dr von Leyden has found references to Kaiserspiel or Karnöffel being played in Switzerland from the early seventeenth century (*Schweizer Idiotikon*, Zurich, 1895, vol. 3, p. 514); in Lübeck in the early eighteenth century (Sporham-Krempel, *Ein Handvoll Glück*, Munich, 1958, p. 49); in Switzerland and Thuringia in 1810 *Solothurnisches Wochenblatt*, no. 29, 21 July 1810, p. 222); and in Iserlohn, Westphalia, in the nineteenth century (Kluge-Götze, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache*, Berlin, 1951, p. 366). It is not known whether the game survives in Germany or in Friesland. For all this, see R. von Leyden, *Karnöffel: das Kartenspiel der Landsknechte*, Vienna, 1978, a booklet issued by Piatnik & Söhne with a reproduction pack.

As in most trick-taking games with trumps, a trick may be won only by a trump or a card of the suit led. In all the forms other than the Thuringian one, the ranking of the cards in the trump suit or suits is quite eccentric, and differs wholly from that in the plain suits. In the Thuringian game, the same eccentric ranking obtains in the plain suits as well as in the two trump suits (unless, indeed, the author of the 1783 account had made a mistake in this regard). This difference in the order of the cards in trumps and in the plain suits is but an extreme example of something that happens in several other games, notably in Ombre; but, again with the exception of the Thuringian form, Karnöffel has an absolutely unique feature. This is that only the highest of the trump cards are fully fledged trumps, that can beat any card of a plain suit. The lowest cards of the trump suit have no power as trumps at all, while the intermediate ones are what may be called partial trumps: they can beat cards of a plain suit below a certain rank, but not those above it.

In detail, the ranking of the cards differs considerably in the various forms: but it is worth describing, together with the names used for certain cards, for the light that is thrown on some of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century references.

(1) As remarked, the nineteenth-century Swiss game was played with a full 48-card Swiss-suited pack. The Banners (10s) were called Kaisers; a player holding one or more could declare it before the start of actual play, thus increasing the value of the round and making the Kaiser a trump; if not declared, it did not become a trump and belonged to its proper suit. In the plain suits, the cards ranked, in descending order: King, Ober, Unter, Banner (if not declared), 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, Deuce (called *Sau* = Sow). The most remarkable features, both of this game and of the modern Swiss version, are, as just observed, that only certain cards of the trump suit have any power as trumps, those that do being called *Stecher*, and that only some of the *Stecher* function as fully fledged trumps; those that do are called *Königstecher* or *Kingstecher* (King-beaters), because they beat even the King of a plain suit. In the nineteenth-century game, the *Königstecher* were, in descending order: the Unter of the trump suit, called the *Jos*; the 6 of the trump suit; the Deuce or *Sau* of the trump suit; and the Kaiser of Roses (if declared), called *Blass* (pale). The remaining six *Stecher* had restricted powers as trumps: if a plain suit were led, they could beat certain cards of that suit, but were beaten by others. The 3 of trumps and, below it, the Kaiser of Acorns (if declared), called *Grün* (green), were *Oberstecher*, and could beat the Ober of a plain suit and any lower card, but not the King. Next came the two *Unterstecher*, the 4 of trumps followed by the Kaiser of Shields or *Tätsch*: these could beat an Unter of a plain suit or any lower card, but not the Ober or King. Last came the two *Farbstecher*, which could beat any numeral card of a plain suit (including an undeclared Banner), but not a court card: these were, in order, the 5 of trumps and the Kaiser of Bells or *Fugel*. Thus, if Shields were trumps, and the 9 of Acorns were led, followed in turn by the 5 of Shields, the Unter of Acorns and the 4 of Shields, each card in succession would beat the preceding one; the Unter would beat the 5 of trumps because the latter was only a *Farbstecher*, but would be beaten by the 4 of trumps because it was an *Unterstecher*.

The 7 of the trump suit, called *Sibille* or *Babeli*, behaved in a peculiar way, as in all Karnöffel games. When led to a trick, it could be beaten only by the highest card of all, the *Jos* or trump Unter; but when played to a trick otherwise than as the first card, it lacked all trick-taking power. The remaining four cards of the trump suit, the King, Ober, 9 and 8, had no power as trumps, but formed, in effect, a separate plain suit, ranking in that order. Thus, if one of the *Stecher* were led to a trick, it could be beaten only by a higher *Stecher*; e.g. the 3 of trumps, if led, could be beaten only by a *Königstecher*, and not by the King of trumps. But if one of the four cards of the trump suit which were not *Stecher* were led, it could be beaten only by a higher such card or a *Stecher* of the appropriate rank, the Ober by an *Oberstecher* and the King by a *Königstecher*. Thus, if the Ober of the trump suit were led, it could be beaten by the trump 3, and that in turn by the King of the trump suit.

(2) The modern Swiss game is played without the 8s and 9s; with this exception, the cards rank in the plain suits as before, the Unter being called *Bauer* and, as usual nowadays, the Deuce being called *Ass* (Ace). There are now six *Kingstecher*, which are, in descending order: the Kaiser of Bells, called *Mugg*; the 5 of trumps; the *Bauer* (Unter) of trumps, called *Joos*; the 6 of trumps; the Ace (Deuce) of trumps; and the Kaiser of Roses, called *Blass* as before. (It will be seen that the former *Farbstecher* have been promoted.) The *Oberstecher* are the 3 of trumps followed by the Kaiser of Shields, called *Oberkaiser*; the *Unterstecher* are the 4 of trumps, followed by the Kaiser of Acorns, called *Wydli* or *Gyger*. The 7 of trumps, with no special name, has the same peculiarity as before: played to a trick, it has no power at all, but, led to one, it can be beaten only by the *Joos*. The *Joos*, being no longer the

highest card, can then in turn be beaten by the *Mugg* or the 5 of trumps, neither of which could have beaten the trump 7 directly. This leaves only the King and Ober of the trump suit, called, respectively, *der Fuil* and *hiratä*; they in effect form, as before, a diminutive plain suit of their own, having no power as trumps or when a *Stecher* has been led.

(3) The Frisian game is or was played with 48 cards, comprising a full French-suited pack from which the 10s have been removed. The cards in the plain suits rank, in descending order, Ace, King, Queen, Jack (*Bauer*), 9, 8 and so on down to 2. Five cards, called *Alten* (old ones), are permanent trumps, and rank above all the others: they are, in descending order, 2 of Hearts, 4 of Clubs, 8 of Spades, 8 of Hearts and 9 of Diamonds.[41] Then follow, in descending order, the Aces, the Jacks, the 6s (called *Papen*, Pope), the 2s (called *Twist*), the 3s (called *Drist*) and the 4s (called *Wagen*, Carriage, or *Viereck*, Rectangle) of the two trump suits, save for any that are *Alten*. Only the trumps down to the 6s or *Papen* inclusive are fully-fledged trumps able to beat any card of a plain suit; the 2s can beat Kings or lower, but not Aces, and the 3s Queens or lower, but not Kings or Aces. It seems likely that the 4s of trumps beat Jacks or lower, though this is not explicitly stated. The 7s of the trump suits are even more highly privileged than in the Swiss games: played to a trick, they have no trick-taking power, but, led to a trick, they can be beaten by nothing whatever, not even the *Alten*. The 8s and 9s of the trump suits are also privileged: called *Freikarten*, when led to a trick they can be beaten only by the *Alten* or the Ace or Jack (*Bauer*) of a trump suit. Presumably the King, Queen, 9, 8 and 5 of the trump suits rank in that order and have no power as trumps, though this is not made plain: any player who holds a trump 5, called *Hunde* (Dog), may exchange it for one of the exposed trumps before the start of play, and this is a privilege accorded in many games to the lowest card of the trump suit. The trump suits are called the *gewählte Farben* (selected suits), and the plain suits *buterwählte* (unselected).

(4) In the Thuringian game, there were again some permanent trumps, ranking above all others: in descending order, the 8 of Leaves, called *der Tolle* (the Madman) or *das alte Thier* (the Old Beast); the 9 of Hearts, called *das rothe Thier* (the Red Beast); and the 9 of Bells, called *das gelbe Thier* (the Yellow Beast). The pack used was the 36-card German-suited one, which thus lacked 3s, 4s and 5s. The highest cards of the two trump suits, ranking below the three permanent trumps, were the Ober, called *Oberkarniffel* or *Landsknecht* (Footsoldier), followed by the Unter, called *Unterkarniffel* or *Büttel* (Beadle), and then the 6, called the *Papst* (Pope). The 7s of the trump suits, called *die böse Sieben* (the evil 7s), had the same privilege as in the Frisian game; led to a trick, they automatically won. They could not be led to the first trick, however. The 8s and 9s of the trump suits (other than the three Beasts) were called *Freykarten*; their role is not explained very clearly, but it appears that, though without power as trumps, they could be beaten only by the three Beasts, the Karniffels and the Popes. The Deuce, the King and the 10 of each trump suit are said to be the lowest cards and to be merely for throwing away: evidently they too had no power as trumps. A player holding a trump 10 could exchange it for one of the exposed trumps at the start of play. There is no indication that any of the cards acted as partial trumps: evidently the cards of the trump suits were divided into fully fledged trumps and those without any power as trumps at all. The order in the plain suits imitated that in the trump suits, namely, in descending order, Ober, Unter, 6, 8, 9, Deuce, King, 10, 7. An Ober or Unter of a plain suit was called *fauler Schlingel* (lazy rascal). The plain suits were called *ungewählte Farben* (unselected suits). In the game as played in the nineteenth-century at Iserlohn, Westphalia, the 9 of Hearts was the permanent highest trump, but the *böse Sieben*, when led to a trick, could not be beaten even by it; this form therefore appears to resemble the Thuringian and Frisian more than the Swiss ones, but no further details are available. Much of the interest of the Frisian and Swiss games lies in the system of scoring; in the latter, there is, during the deal, a pause after the delivery of cards in each round to two successive players, during which either side may offer to increase the value of the round and the other may either accept or surrender. The details are of no importance for the history of the game.

Despite the differences between the various forms, there is a strong family resemblance between them. All are simple trick-taking games, without the obligation to follow suit, in most of which there are only five tricks per round; in all there are trumps, and in all the trump 7 has the peculiarity that it is powerless when played to a trick, but cannot be beaten, or can be beaten by only one card, when it is led. Above all, all have the feature that the ranking of the cards in the trump suit or suits is eccentric, and that only the highest cards actually function as trumps. The Thuringian game is exceptional in having an unusual order in the plain suits; and in all forms but the Thuringian one there is the feature, unique in trick-taking play, of partial trumps.

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[41] The article reprinted in *Der Alte* is in German, and, though it quotes some specimen remarks by players in Frisian, it for the most part gives the names of the cards in German; I cite them in the forms given in the article.

Games can change greatly in the course of their history, and, in particular, may borrow interesting features from other games. Trappola, for example, began as a trick-taking game without trumps, and later imported this feature; and dozens of games, including Tarot games, adopted the practice of bidding which did not originally belong to them. But, in general, a game preserves throughout its history that feature which was characteristic of it and gave it its particular flavour and identity. It looks very much as though the special features of Karnöffel which distinguished it from other games were a trump suit in which only some of the cards functioned as trumps, the special role of the trump 7 and, probably, the presence of partial trumps, together with the rearrangement of the ranking in the trump suit. Even if we had no indication of how the game was played in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we should have to regard it as probable that these were original features of it, and to assume that it was from the beginning a game played with trumps.

The earliest substantial reference to Karnöffel discovered by Dr von Leyden is a poem by Meissner written in or before 1450:[42] from it, he has conjecturally reconstructed the ranking of the highest cards as being, in descending order: the Unter, called the *karnöffel*; the Deuce, called the *süw* (Sow); the 3, called the *babst* (Pope); the 5, called the *keyser* (Kaiser); and the 4, called the *tüfel* (Devil). The term 'Sow' for the Deuce was a common one, since, in many early German and some Swiss packs, a sow was depicted on each Deuce. The other four names, however, are peculiar to the game of Karnöffel, and, though later attached to cards of other ranks, they were evidently used from an early stage in its history.

The next references of any substance are from Bishop Geiler. There are two principal passages, both somewhat confusing. The first comes from a sermon originally preached in 1496. Geiler is comparing the social order with the order of the cards in play, and begins by remarking that in (ordinary) card games, there is a fixed order, in which the King beats the Ober, the Ober the Unter and so forth. In the Latin version, he then continues: 'But now a game has been invented which is called Kaiserspiel or Karnöffel in which everything is turned upside down: thus the 3s beat the Ober, the 2 beats the King, and so on; and there occurs a wonderful transformation (*vicissitudo*) of Kaisers, as in this game the Kaiser is made by chance now from this set (*cetu*), now from another.' (The meaning of this last sentence is obscure, and I have translated it as best I could.) After speaking of the perversion of the social order, he comes back to his analogy, and says further: 'But now another game has been invented with the ranking of the cards such that the Unter beats the King, and the 2 and the 6 likewise, the 3 beats the Ober and the lower-numbered beats the higher-numbered; and it may happen that from this number some are by chance made Kaisers.'[43] The German text differs slightly. In it, the first passage runs: 'But now we have a game called Karniffelspiel in which everything is turned upside down: the 3s beat an Ober, the 4 beats the Unter, the 2 and the 6 beat a King; and a card is turned over, so that now one is Kaiser, now another becomes Kaiser, as luck will have it.' The subsequent passage runs: 'But now there has been invented another game with the ranking of the cards such that the Unter beats the King, the 2 and the 6 beat the King, the 3 beats the Ober, and the lower-numbered beat the higher-numbered, when they are in the game of Kaiserspiel.'[44] The other principal mention of the game by Geiler is in a sermon preached in 1515. The German text of the crucial passage runs: 'The game of Karnöffel has been invented, in which the lower-numbered cards beat the higher-numbered, and the Unter beats the Ober, and a Kaiser is made by turning up a card; the 2s beat a King, and the 6 and the 2 beat the Ober (or: the 6 beats the 2 and the Ober), and the Carnöffel beats all of them.' Later he says, of 'those who play Karnöffel, when they wish to do so, they can draw a card out, and then shuffle the cards, so that the same one is exposed and is Kaiser'. A little later yet in the same sermon, he speaks of throwing all the cards, the King, the Kaiser, the Ober, the Banner and the Devil, on to the fire.[45]

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[42] 'Eyn suberlich höfflich spruch von dem spiel karnoffelin', ed. by J.C. von Fichard, *Frankfurter Archiv für altere Deutsche Literatur und Geschichte*, Frankfurt am Main, 1815, part III, chap. 4, 'Altdeutsche Lieder aus der ersten Hälfte des XV Jahrhunderts', no. LXI, pp. 293-7.

[43] 'Sed nunc ludus inventus qui appellatur (keiserspil) ludus Caesaris: vel (karniffelius) in quo hec omnia pervertuntur: ita ut tria vincant superiorem: duo regem etc. fitque mira vicissitudo cesarum: ut in hoc ludo iam de hoc cetu/ iam de alio fiat cesar ad fortunam ... Nunc aut est alius ludus inventus in cartas potestatum ut inferior vincat regem/ et duo et sex etc. tria superiorem et minor maiorem: si fuerit ex horum numero qui forte fortuitu facti sunt cesares', *Sermones Prestantissimi Doctoris Johannis Geileri Keisersbergii de Arbore Humana*, Strasbourg, 1515, pp. 132b-133b.

[44] 'Aber ietz so hat man ein spil/ heisset der karniffel spil karniffelius/ da seint alle ding verkert/ die drü stechen ein ober/ die fier den undern/ zwei und sechs stechen ein künig/ und so schlecht man umb/ ietz so ist einerlei keiser/ darnach so würt ein anderer lei keiser/ wie das glück gibt ... Aber ietz so ist ein ander spil funden in dem regiment/ auff der karten/ das der underbüb sticht den künnig/ die zwei und sechs ein künnig/ die drü den obern/ und der minder den merern/ wan sie von dem keiser spil sein', Geiler von Kaisersberg, *Das Buch de Arbore Humana. Von dem menschlichen Baum*, Strasbourg, 1521, pp. 138-40.

These passages leave a very confused impression. There is a card called the Devil, but we are never told which it is. There is also a card called the Karnöffel, which beats all others, but, again, Bishop Geiler does not further identify it: it does not seem on the face of it that it can be the Unter, since it is stated that the 4 beats the Unter. There is no mention of a card called the Pope; and apparently a card, or perhaps two cards, are selected as Kaisers by a random draw. More light is thrown on the matter by examining the Protestant sources. A work of 1537 asks, with allegorical intention, the following questions. Why does the Karnöffel beat the Kaiser and the Pope, when he is a simple footsoldier (*Landsknecht*) and the Ober is a cavalryman? Why is the Pope called the 'Six', and why does he beat the Kaiser with all the cavalrymen and footsoldiers, with the exception of the Karnöffel, that is, the selected (*erweleten*) footsoldier? Why is the Devil, or the evil 7 (*die böse sieben*), free as the devil (*teufelsfrei*), so that neither the Kaiser, the Pope nor the Karnöffel can beat him? Why is the selected (*erwelete*) Deuce, the lowest and weakest of all the cards, called the Kaiser? To this last question the answer is given that many believe that the Pope has stolen so much from him that, although he is still called Emperor, he has become a beggar; the selected (*erwelete*) 6 has three times as much as the Deuce, and so it is no wonder that the triple crown beats the single crown of the Kaiser. A further question is why the lazy Fritz (*der faule Fritz*) beats the 10 or Banner.[46] Another satirical work of 1546 takes the form of a dialogue between the Pope and the Devil. From this we learn that neither of the Devil and the Pope beat the other; that the Pope beats all the cards, including the Kaiser and the Kings, with the exception of the Karnöffel; that the Karnöffel beats the Pope, the Devil and all other cards; that the Karnöffel is an Unter; that it is the 2, 3, 4 and 5, and only they, that are called Kaiser; that the 2 beats the King, the Obers and the other Kaisers; and that the 5 is beaten by all other Kaisers, and by the King, Ober, Pope and Karnöffel, but beats only the 10, 9, 8, etc.[47]

From Geiler's muddling remarks it might seem that we were dealing with a game in which there was a perverse ranking of the cards in every suit; but, although these Protestant sources seem to differ in the way the term 'Kaiser' is used, the earlier one reserving it for the Deuce alone, it is apparent from them that only one of the Unters is chosen to be the Karnöffel, the highest card in the game, only one 6 is chosen to be the Pope, only one Deuce becomes a Kaiser; presumably also there is only one evil 7 or Devil. It thus becomes natural to suppose that these are the Unter, 6, 2 and 7 of some one suit selected by a chance procedure. It would nevertheless be very difficult to reconstruct from these passages alone the precise order of the cards. With a knowledge of the nineteenth-century Swiss game, however, the remark that the Deuce, 3, 4 and 5 are all Kaisers, and that the Deuce beats the King and the Ober, whereas the 5 beats only the numeral cards (those from 10 down), becomes extremely suggestive: we appear to have here the same idea of partial trumps that is found in the Swiss game. With the same hindsight, we can make sense of

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[45] 'man hat erdacht karnöffelßspil/ da stechen die mindern die merern/ unnd die under die obern/ und macht man einerley keiser/ die schlecht man umb/ als da die zwei stechen ein künig/ und die sechs die zwei/ den oberman und das Carnöffel sticht es alssamen … die/ die karnöffels spil spilen/ wenn sie gern einerlei hetten/ so künnen sie es ziehen daruff/ unnd also mischen/ das der selbenlei uff ligt/ und keiser ist … Wenn denn das spil uß ist unnd man lang gekurtzweilt hat mitt der kart/ so zerreißt man sie/ unnd würfft man den Künnig unnd Keiser/ den Oberman das paner und den tüffel als miteinander in das feuer und verbrent es', *Die brösamlin doct. Keiserspergs uffgelesen von Frater Johann Paulin*, Strasbourg, 1517, pp. 109-10.

[46] 'Eine Frage des ganzen heiligen Ordens der Kartenspiler von Karnöffel an das Concilium zu Mantua 1537', in J. Voigt, 'Über Pasquille, Spottlieder und Schmähschriften aus der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts', *Historisches Taschenbuch*, ed. Fr. von Raumer, 9. Jahrgang, Leipzig, 1838, p. 418. This was reprinted in Cyriacus Spangenberg, 'Wider die böse Sieben ins Teufels Karnöffelspiel'; see C. Fr. Flögel, *Geschichte der komischen Litteratur*, vol. III, Leipzig, 1786, p. 321. The alternative name *die böse Sieben* for *der Teufel* is Spangenberg's addition to the original text.

[47] Pasquillus, *Newe Zeytung vom Teüffel*, 1546.

Bishop Geiler's observation that the 6 and the 2 beat a King, the 3 beats an Ober and the 4 an Unter. What we seem, then, to arrive at is essentially the Swiss game, without the special role of what, in it, are called Kaisers, namely the Banner 10s. Within some one suit, the Unter becomes the Karnöffel, the highest card in the game; it is followed by the 6 or Pope, and then the Deuce or Kaiser; next come the 3, 4 and 5 of that suit, whether or not they are called Kaisers; and the Devil or evil 7 of that suit plays the special role that it plays in all the subsequent forms of the game, with some variation about whether or not, when led, it can be beaten by the Karnöffel. The Karnöffel, Pope and Deuce are unqualified trumps; but the 3 can beat plain cards only from the Ober down, the 4 those from the Unter down, and the 5 only numeral cards. It follows that, in the plain suits, the cards have their usual ranking, with the King highest and the Deuce lowest. Presumably the remaining cards, King, Ober, 10, 9 and 8, of the selected suit had no power as trumps.

Evidently Meissner's poem reflects an earlier stage of the game; but it is unlikely that the special names of cards already used in it, the Kaiser, the Pope and the Devil, applied to all those of the relevant denominations: they would surely have been names of individual cards of some one selected suit. We are thus driven to conclude that a trump suit was a feature of Karnöffel from the beginning: and since Karnöffel was in existence by 1426, whereas we have seen reason to put the origin of Tarot no earlier than about 1435, this destroys the claim of Tarot to have been the very first card game played with trumps. Was there any connection between the two? Dr von Leyden, impressed by the presence of the Pope, the Emperor and the Devil in both games, is persuaded that there must be. The reason is unconvincing: all three figures were very familiar to men of the fifteenth century, and their occurrence in both a German and an Italian game requires no hypothesis of influence either way to explain it. But, before we go further into this question, let us assume that there was such a connection, and ask, further, whether this invalidates our hypothesis about the origin of the Tarot pack.

On the face of it, it does: we can no longer say that the invention of the Tarot pack represented an independent invention of the idea of trumps. But on reflection we see that we have here two rather dissimilar ideas. In the later forms of Karnöffel, there is a large number of trumps, owing to some cards being permanent trumps and, in some versions, to there being two trump suits. But, in the earlier form, there are just three cards of one suit, the Karnöffel (Unter), Pope (6) and Kaiser (Deuce), lifted out of their natural order to become fully-fledged trumps, three more, the 3, 4 and 5, which serve as partial trumps, and one, the Devil (7), which plays a special role. Let us suppose that the inventors of the Tarot pack were familiar with Karnöffel and got their idea from it: what they did with it was still something radically new, namely to add to the pack twenty-one special cards to play the role that the three top cards played in Karnöffel. They *might* have thought, instead, of making all the cards in some one suit behave in that way; but, on the assumption that Karnöffel was the only game in which trumps had hitherto appeared, it would have been in no way unnatural for them to have done what we are supposing that they did. The etymological evidence makes it clear that it was from Tarot, the game originally known as Triumphs, that the idea of trumps was taken into card play generally. In the Swiss Karnöffel rules, the word *Trumpf* is used for the trump suit as a whole, those members of it which actually function as trumps being called *Stecher*. But in the accounts of the Thuringian and Frisian games, we find instead the adjective *gewählte* or *erwählte* (selected), as we do in the early sources, which never use *Trumpf* or any cognate word; here the original technical term, antedating the term *Trumpf*, which derived ultimately from the Italian word *trionfi* as used of the Tarot trumps, has been transmitted over the years right down to the twentieth century. That the game of Tarot, rather than that of Karnöffel, must have been the original source of the idea of trumps as it features in countless European trick-taking games played with the regular pack is also evident from the form which that idea took. If Karnöffel had been its source, we should expect that, at least in some cases, the special features of Karnöffel would be found in other games, namely that not all the cards of the trump suit function as trumps, and that some are merely partial trumps. Yet these features are quite unknown outside Karnöffel: in all other games, a card either has unlimited power as a trump or none, and every card of the trump suit, or in sequence with it, is a genuine trump. The strongest hypothesis concerning the relation of Karnöffel to Tarot does not impugn our thesis about the origin of the Tarot pack and its later consequences for card play; it merely diminishes the originality of its inventors.

But was there any actual connection between Karnöffel and Tarot? There is some reason to think so. The preferred Swiss name for Karnöffel, Kaiserspiel, was already familiar to Bishop Geiler, who, in one passage quoted above, uses the term *Keiserspil*, or, in Latin, *ludus Caesaris*. A Latin text from Würzburg contains a passage relating to the period 1443-1455 concerning *unus quidam ... ludens ad cartas ludum vocatum imperatoris* (a certain man ... playing at cards the game called the Emperor's game).[48] *Ludus Imperatoris* would be quite a natural Latin rendering of *Kaiserspiel*, and may therefore denote the game called by Geiler *ludus Caesaris*, i.e. Karnöffel. In this case, the game may also have been known at Ferrara. In 1450 a certain Andrea di Bonsignore of that city was paid 2 lire for painting two packs of *carte da Imperatori*;[49] around 1454 Borso d'Este played at cards *dette dell'imperatore* (called 'of the Emperor'), and an account-book for the years 1452-7 records two payments, at 12 soldi a pack, for *carte da imperaturi* or *de imperatore*.[50] Since Ferrara was a principal early centre for the game of Tarot, and may have been its birthplace, it is hard not to suspect that, if Karnöffel were known there soon after the invention of the Tarot pack, it was known before that event, and gave the original idea which led to it. If so, Karnöffel is the remote ancestor of Whist, Triomphe, Ombre and all the rest, by a line that leads, surprisingly, through the games which the Tarot pack was invented to play.

This conclusion is far from certain. If the *carte da imperatore* made in Ferrara were cards intended for playing Karnöffel, they were presumably German-suited cards, and there is no other indication that German-suited cards were known, let alone made, in Italy during the fifteenth or even the sixteenth century. Moreover, Karnöffel appears to have been from the start what it was in later times, a game of the common people; it is therefore difficult to imagine its coming to be known in the elegant court of Ferrara. More probably, the two games of Karnöffel and Tarot were unconnected, and represented different independent approaches to the idea of trumps as we are familiar with it in games like Bridge. In Karnöffel, one of the ordinary suits is used, but only some of the cards in it are given total or partial power as trumps; in Tarot, a whole new series of picture cards is added to the pack. Just as bidding became part of many positive trick-taking games that originally lacked that feature, so the idea of trumps was incorporated into almost all such games, from some of which, such as Trappola, it is known originally to have been absent: the most notable such games to resist the idea of trumps are Piquet and those of the popular Italian Tressette family. It happened to be Tarot from which the idea was taken over into other card games.

Whether or not Karnöffel served as an inspiration to those who invented the Tarot pack, the reason for its invention cannot be doubted, namely to embody the new idea of trumps in a special additional sequence of cards. It was motivated, therefore, by considerations that had to do, not with magic, or the occult, but with the only use to which playing cards were then put, that is, to play card games; that has been the principal contention of this chapter.

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[48] W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 52; the text is a manuscript *Tractatus de contractibus* by Paulus Wann, Cod. lat. man. 4695 p. 37 and Cod. lat. 12 730 p. 56b in the Staatsbibliothek in Munich.

[49] G. Campori, 'Le Carte da Giuoco dipinte per gli Estensi nel Secolo XV', *Atti e Memorie delle Reali Deputazioni di Storia Patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, vol. III, Modena, 1874, pp. 123-32; see p. 127.

[50] See G. Bertoni, op. cit., p. 218, for Duke Borso's game, and fn. 3 for the entries in the account-book of the court. W.L. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 96, mentions *carte dei Imperatori* as being painted in Ferrara in 1450, but gives no reference; he may be alluding to Campori's article.